

The Transition of Collegiate Athletes to Professional Sports:  
A Case Study at a California University Division One Athletic Program

A Senior Project

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## ABSTRACT

The following study investigates the correlation between athletic success in athletes as they transition from high school or college athletics to the professional world of competitive sports. Athletes who are described as being “cant-miss prospects” are never really a sure-fire thing for professional teams, so the purpose of this study was to research and analyze what situation for athletes would be best for them specifically relating to how many years an athlete should stay in college to develop their technical skills as well as mature as a human being before forgoing their remaining college eligibility by declaring for a professional sports draft. These issues are important for professional teams and scouts as each year, they are sent out to evaluate the new talent coming through the ranks and determine their athletic skill as well as their emotional stamina, all of which play a major factor in whether a player is drafted first overall or 10<sup>th</sup> overall, which could be a difference of around \$10 million. There is a focus on gaining expert opinions from coaches and players to help determine what path is best suited for these athletes.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction.....	
Statement of the Problem .....	2
Background of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study .....	2
Setting for the Study .....	3
Research Questions .....	4
Definition of Terms .....	5
Organization of Study .....	5
<b>Chapter 2.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Literature Review .....	7
Does Spending Extra Year In College Help Athletes.....	7
How Has High School to Professional Sports Panned Out.....	9
College Athletics Preparing for the Next Level .....	10
Eligibility Rules for Professional Sports Leagues .....	11
How Are Athletes Handling the Pressure.....	12
<b>Chapter 3 .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Methodology .....	14
Data Sources .....	14
Participants.....	14
Interview Design .....	15
Data Collection .....	16

Data Presentation .....	17
Delimitations .....	18
<b>Chapter 4 .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Data Analysis .....	19
Description of Participating Experts in Related Fields.....	19
Joe Callero .....	19
Steve Sampson .....	20
Chris Eversley .....	20
Questionnaire .....	21
Research Questions .....	28
Data .....	31
<b>Chapter 5 .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Discussion and Recommendations.....	44
Summary .....	44
Discussion ..	45
Recommendations for Practice .....	52
Years Spending in College .....	52
How Cal Poly Helps .....	53
Study Conclusion .....	54
<b>References .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>57</b>
Interview Transcription: Joe Callero .....	57

<b>Appendix B .....</b>	<b>63</b>
Interview Transcription: Steve Sampson .....	63
<b>Appendix C .....</b>	<b>67</b>
Interview Transcription: Chris Eversley .....	67

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	<i>Is Spending Extra Years in College Better</i> .....	33
Table 2.	<i>Judging the Jump from High School to the NBA</i> .....	34
Table 3.	<i>Survey Question 1</i> .....	35
Table 4.	<i>Survey Question 2</i> .....	36
Table 5.	<i>Survey Question 3</i> .....	37
Table 6.	<i>Survey Question 4</i> .....	38
Table 7.	<i>Cal Poly on Athletes Hoping to go Pro</i> .....	40
Table 8.	<i>Opinions on the One-And-Done Rule</i> .....	41
Table 9.	<i>Handling the Pressure of Performing in Late Teens</i> .....	42
Table 10.	<i>How to Help Athletes Reach Their Potential</i> .....	43

# Chapter 1

## *Introduction*

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study will focus on a broad spectrum of athletic success in athletes as they transition from collegiate sports to the world of professional sports. More specifically, I will be analyzing the success of athletes that leave college after their underclassman years (Freshman & Sophomore), leave after their upperclassman years (Junior & Senior) or leave for professional sports after high school and don't attend a university. The purpose of the study will be to determine if athletes are better off staying for a certain number of years in college that will help them in adjusting and performing in a professional environment.

For this study, I will be focusing on Basketball, Football and Soccer because each sport has different eligibility requirements that need to be met before advancing to a draft or selection process of playing on a professional sports team.

Another aspect of the study I will also give some attention to will be focusing on Cal Poly Athletics specifically and how athletes who have attended Cal Poly fare in the world of professional sports and how Cal Poly allows athletes to succeed not only in the classroom, but on the field or court as well.

## **Background of the Problem**

There has not been much literature published directly relating to the topic I am studying, which is very interesting because I could possibly be the first to really research a problem like this in professional sports. A big part of this problem also deal with professional scouts for teams who judge these young athletes and ultimately determine if they are or aren't good enough to play in the professional league.

Those same scouts also said Tom Brady wasn't good enough to be a highly drafted prospect out of Michigan, or Kurt Warner wasn't good enough to be drafted at all. So why is this the case where these scouts who are paid hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to evaluate these athletes and determine if they "have what it takes" to play in their professional sport?

## **Purpose of the Study**

As a huge a huge sports fan, I have always been perplexed by the fact that some great athletes never pan out to their full potential, and while debating what I wanted to focus my senior project, I didn't really know what to think about that would give me enough research and evidence to have a concrete argument and proven points that would satisfy the requirements of this last major assignment in my undergraduate education.

This subject of athletic success in high school and collegiate athletes to the professional sports world is something that has never been studied before, and I'm genuinely curious to the research I'm about to discover because it could possibly be the answer to how much time an athlete needs in different sports before leaving for



professional sports and how well they are prepared to be able to succeed on and off the field or court.

## **Setting for the Study**

The study will be taken and researched on as a Senior Project requirement at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo on the central coast in San Luis Obispo, California. Interviews will be conducted with college coaches here at Cal Poly and will be asked questions pertaining to each specific sport and how athletes are judged for professional sports and how athletes from Cal Poly who have played or play currently professionally do in their respective professional sport.

I will be interviewing 8<sup>th</sup> year Men's Basketball Head Coach, Joe Callero. Coach Callero won the Big West Tournament in 2013 and saw Cal Poly to their first NCAA Tournament appearance in school history.

I will also be interviewing Men's Soccer Head Coach, Steve Sampson. Coach Sampson is in his 2<sup>nd</sup> year in charge of the Soccer team and led them to their first NCAA tournament appearance in seven years. I look forward to speaking with Coach Sampson about the issues my studies present pertaining to soccer because Sampson was the head coach of the U.S Men's National Team for the 1998 World Cup in France as well as winning a domestic double as the head coach of the LA Galaxy in 2005; Needless to say, Coach Sampson would be an expert in this study.

And lastly, I will be speaking to former Cal Poly Men's Basketball player and current professional basketball player, Chris Eversley. Chris is regarded as one of the

best players in the programs history. He was a focal point in the team that won the Big West Championship in 2013 and clinched an automatic berth to the NCAA tournament of the first time in the school's history.

## **Research Questions**

I have developed research questions that I feel will help fill gaps in the literature I've reviewed and will be concise with my interviews with Cal Poly coaches and former player.

1. Does spending extra years in College help an athlete be better prepared for the world of professional sports?
2. How has the jump from high school straight to professional sports panned out for a majority of those who've done it?
3. Would the general population leave college early for a draft or stay in school longer to improve draft stock or continue getting their education?
4. What are thoughts of coaches and players on how Cal Poly helps their athletes who have ambitions of playing professionally?
5. What are the opinions of the coaches and players of the one-and-done rule in basketball?
6. How are young athletes handling the pressure of performing up to their potential in their early to late teens?
7. What can be done to help these athletes reach their potential in their youth/college?

## **Definition of Terms**

The terms below are specifically defined to assist the reader in terms of clarification when trying to understand certain topics in the study.

NFL Supplemental Draft: An extra draft after the regular NFL draft, which allows accommodates players who did not enter the regular draft. Players usually enter the supplementary draft because they missed the filing deadline for the draft or issues with their eligibility. In order to select a player in the Supplemental Draft, teams must forfeit the same level pick in the following year's NFL Draft. (Ex, Paul Oliver was selected in the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the Supplemental draft in 2007, so the Chargers didn't have a 4<sup>th</sup> round pick in the 2008 NFL Draft).

MLS Homegrown Player Rule: A program that allows MLS teams to sign local players from their own academy teams straight to their first team rosters.

Generation Adidas Players: A joint program with the MLS and U.S soccer that encouraged American players to join the MLS as early as they could. These players earn a much higher salary than the league minimum that does not count towards the team's salary caps.

## **Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 included the background of the problem, why I decided to study this topic, and a brief definition of terms needed to know for clarification throughout the study. Chapter 2 will consist of a literature review of the related study and what holes were found in that literature review. Chapter 3 will have the methodology of the study I

will be conducting. In chapter 4, the data will be compared to research found in the literature review. Chapter 5 will conclude the research with an overall summary of the study conducted.

# Chapter 2

## *Literature Review*

A literature review of sources that relate to athletic success in young athletes as high school, underclassmen, or upperclassmen in college and analyzing a trend of how successful those athletes are in professional sports, specifically in the sports of Soccer, Football and Basketball, where each sport has different eligibility rules for the professional level.

### **Does spending extra years in college help an athlete be better prepared for professional sports?**

Speaking from a Maturity standpoint, people would think it would be better for collegiate athletes to spend as much time as they can in college for a variety of reasons. Some want to be able to finish their education to have as a back-up plan in case their pro careers don't take off or suffer serious injury and can no longer play. But going into the world of professional sports, a 19 year old rookie will differ from a 23 year old rookie in maturity level, and in professional sports, maturity of a player could make or break a player's professional career.

One aspect of the collegiate game that is a major decision for athletes debating whether to go pro or stay in school longer is the issue with the NCAA in the matter of paying collegiate athletes, which to this day has been strictly forbidden. Tyler Brown (2014) mentions that, "College Athletes are beginning to speak out against the current sport model that treats college athletes as unpaid amateurs, while the National Collegiate

Athletic Association continues to stand behind that model”. So now there is an issue of athletes wanting to bolt for the draft because there is an immediate chance to get paid, and you won’t be paid while you are still playing in college. In the case where you do receive what the NCAA calls “Improper Benefits”, which could include being paid in cash, getting a car, or literally anything else that the NCAA says you can’t have, and you get caught, there will be strict punishments handed down to the university and the sports program.

Something Brown brings up in his article is the development of an argument where he mentions that Universities could avoid the whole issue of pay because they would be interns of the university. “By framing college athletes as an internship under the Fair Labor and Standards Act, universities would avoid the requirement to compensate all college athletes as employees.”

Brown brings up an interesting point with this situation because there is a whole different argument when it comes to internships themselves. People have been complaining that the work they do for these said “internships” is comparable to the work they would be doing if they were an entry-level position at that certain company. Therefore with that being said there’s been growing interest of creating a national law of paying interns at least minimum wage for any work considered to be an internship. Now if that ever comes into play, then Brown’s argument would be abolished, in the sense that his collegiate internship proposal would still be an argument against Brown and the athletes would be getting paid because they are interns.

## **How has the jump from high school straight to professional sports panned out for a majority of those who've done it?**

The NBA's One-And-Done rule has been widely disregarded as one of the worst rules for a college athlete, because since being implemented in 2006, College Basketball players have to be a year removed from high school before declaring and being eligible for the following NBA Draft. Chuck Raasch (2015) mentions in his article about Senator Claire McCaskill that she, "Is contemplating legislative action to address what she called a 'phony, phony, phony' college sports rules that allow basketball players to leave after one year for the NBA". Another option for basketball players who don't want to college is playing professionally overseas for a year and then being eligible for the next NBA draft because they are "a year removed from high school athletics". (Raasch 2015)

But before 2006, players could make the decision to leave after high school straight to the NBA, and for some of the greats like Kobe Bryant and LeBron James who did make that jump, it is tough going into the NBA as I mentioned in the previous section when it comes to young rookies in professional sports.

Raasch explains the frustrations raised by McCaskill in his article and she has a good point from the standpoint where college basketball players who only stay for one year in college are basically being borrowed for the university and don't really gain much education in the process because they are only staying one year. However, if you hypothetically have a very excellent basketball player who is debating whether to go to college or play professionally overseas for a year, a change in the current "One-And-Done" rule which could possibly require a college basketball player to stay 2+ years in college could deter a basketball player from going to college since they could play

overseas and still make money before coming back to America and playing in the NBA.

## **How do Athletic Directors and coaches think that College Athletics prepare those athletes with ambitions of playing at the next level?**

There has been a general consensus over the past decade or so, since the NBA implemented the One-And-Done rule that college basketball coaches have thought that the rule hurts college basketball players and its fans instead of helping and enhancing it. David Ramsey spoke with Colorado coach Tad Boyle about the issue it presents, even saying as much as it drains college basketball. “The thing that bothers me about it is that it’s a farce and has nothing to do with what we’re trying to do, and that’s educating young people... I don’t know what to do about it. We’re never going to be able to stop it. We don’t have any teeth.”

Ramsey’s article shows another side to this discussion involving athletes who were hyped up a lot in high school and some that epically failed in the NBA. Ramsey talked to Air Force coach Dave Pilipovich, who watched Korleone Young who was a top high-school basketball player in the 90’s. “He was a cant-miss prospect... You immediately said, ‘this guy’s a pro’. Lots of guys are talented enough to do it, but some aren’t mature enough to do it”. Young went straight from the NBA from high school and only logged a total of 15 minutes in the NBA. Ramsey brings up good points in his article; some of these blue-chip prospects that look like cant-miss players simply need a college atmosphere to grow up and to learn how to be an adult in this world and that was something that Young wasn’t able to do.



## **How does the eligibility rules for professional sport leagues affect college athletes hoping to play at the next level?**

NFL Media Reporter Albert Breer wrote an article in July of 2014 mentioning that, “The NFL has identified the land-rush of underclassmen declaring for the draft as a problem”(2014). In the 2014 draft class, the 107 who declared for the draft, 45 of those prospects went undrafted. In Breer’s article, he spoke with NFL Executive Vice President Troy Vincent, and was quoted as saying, “We want the kid to make an informed decision... Each institution has those resources for every prospect and every head coach. The numbers and the facts speak for themselves”. This system that Vincent mentions allows college coaches to submit a draft grade for their player; each school and coach were allotted 5 draft grades for their players, but they could ask for more.

Now in this analysis, it is assuming that every scout that grades these college prospects is completely accurate, and is always correct and that is simply not the case, ever. A scout's grade on a prospect is a matter of opinion; simple as that. So even if scouts rate player A as the best player in the draft, doesn't mean they're going to become a great professional player, it mean you could be getting the best value at that particular pick, or best upside. And on the flipside, because a scout says a player is going to be undrafted doesn't mean that player is never going to play in the league. Some of the best players in the game have either been drafted very late or have not been drafted at all. Take Kurt Warner for an example. The former Quarterback was undrafted and was working at a grocery store before the Rams picked him up and had one of the best statistical seasons for a quarterback ever in 1999 for the Rams, which was nicknamed “The Greatest Show on Turf”. It just shows that even though so much research, film

study and evaluation goes into evaluating these NFL prospects, doesn't mean one guy is a cant-miss prospect or a guy who will never make it in the league.

## **How are young athletes handling the pressure of performing up to their potential in their early to late teens?**

Soccer is different from Basketball and Football of course. One instance that they are very different is the eligibility rules for those youth soccer players to begin to train and play professionally. If the player is good enough, they could attract international attention from big European clubs and invite them to play for their youth academies and play against other very good youth players. It's different however in America.

Mike Jensen (2015) wrote about Philadelphia Union head coach, Jim Curtin speaking about great young talent Zach Pfeffer who was signed to the Union as their first ever homegrown player at the young age of 15. "Playing college soccer would almost be too easy for him now". This is not uncommon to see very young teens being picked up by Major League Soccer Clubs by the Homegrown Talent clause, which we will mention in the research later in this report.

Now as related the issue of maturity in NBA and NFL athletes in their late teens and early 20's, there is a completely different question and debate when it comes to youth soccer players in America. Because they have the option to bypass college completely, and play for academy teams in America or even across the world if they are offered the chance, the quality of college soccer has been as expected, not very competitive, and not many great talents coming into the MLS from the college draft.

Freddy Adu was the first player to really bring this issue into discussion as he was the youngest player ever drafted in the 2014 MLS SuperDraft where he was taken with

the 1<sup>st</sup> overall pick by D.C United at the young age of just 14. Being labeled as the “American Messi” or the next Pelé really sends your expectations as a professional footballer through the roof. And now playing for his 13<sup>th</sup> team in as many years, Adu couldn’t handle the pressure of living up to the expectations that were presented to him, which I will cover more in the research.

# Chapter 3

## *Methodology*

This chapter will show the methods used for data collection, which includes the sources, collection and presentation of the data and the delimitations of the data.

### **Data Sources**

For this study, I interviewed experts in the coaching field from Cal Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo based off a general questionnaire where some aspects of the question would vary depending on the sport I was focusing on to gain knowledge and a better understanding from an experts point of view about issues pertaining to their particular sport.

I also conducted an online survey with friends and family via Survey Monkey along with promoting the survey on my personal Facebook account, which I will discuss in detail a little later in this chapter.

### **Participants**

Cal Poly Men's Basketball Coach, Joe Callero will be one of my experts I will be speaking to. Coach Callero is in his 7<sup>th</sup> season as Head Coach of the Men's Basketball program at Cal Poly and engineered an unprecedented run to the 2013 NCAA March Madness tournament, securing an automatic bid after winning the Big West Postseason Tournament.

I will also be talking to 2<sup>nd</sup> year Men's Soccer Coach, Steve Sampson about issues relating to my study in the professional soccer world. Coach Sampson was formerly the head coach of the U.S Men's National Team for their trip to the 1998 World Cup in France, as well as winning the MLS Cup and the US Open Cup, also known as the domestic double with the LA Galaxy in 2005. Coach Sampson would be a great source to talk to due to his experience in the professional soccer world.

And lastly, I will be speaking to former Cal Poly men's basketball player and current professional basketball player in Brussels, Belgium, Chris Eversley.

## **Interview Design**

The following questions were asked of each of the experts and varied a little depending on the coach's field of expertise in their particular sport:

8. Does spending extra years in College help an athlete be better prepared for the world of professional sports?
9. How has the jump from high school straight to professional sports panned out for a majority of those who've done it?
10. Would the general population leave college early for a draft or stay in school longer to improve draft stock or continue getting their education?
11. What are thoughts of former Cal Poly athletes, who play professionally, say about how Cal Poly helped them transition into professional sports?
12. How do Athletic Directors and coaches think that College Athletics prepare those athletes with ambitions of playing at the next level?
13. How does the NFL and NBA's eligibility rules for college athletes help those athletes at the next level?

14. Freddy Adu case: How are young soccer players handling the pressure of performing up to their potential in their early to late teens?
15. Is there a better solution out there, or haven't been developed that could help athletes have a better idea of handling expectations and performing to the best of their abilities?

## Data Collection

Data Collection will consist of 2 individual interviews with Coach Joe Callero and Coach Steve Sampson about issues pertaining to the professional sports world relating to the sports they coach, along with a specific view on Cal Poly and how the university helps the athletes in college and preparing for the next level of their sporting lives. Each interview were conducted in May of 2016 and lasted approximately 20 minutes each.

Another source of data collection is the survey I created with Survey Monkey, an online survey creator that can be shared and linked with most social media platforms. Questions I asked in the survey were hypothetical scenarios for those who took it about being an underclassman collegiate basketball player in their freshman or sophomore year of college. Each question I asked was similar but varied depending on where I guaranteed them to end up in the draft:

1. You are an underclassman (Freshman, Sophomore) playing Collegiate Basketball. After your basketball season, you are GUARANTEED to be selected in the top 5 of the NBA draft. Do you leave college and go for the NBA Draft, or stay for another year and better your draft ranking and/or continue getting your education?

2. You are an underclassman (Freshman, Sophomore) playing Collegiate Basketball. After your basketball season, you are GUARANTEED to be a lottery pick in the NBA Draft (Picks 10-20). Do you leave college and go for the NBA Draft, or stay for another year and better your draft ranking and/or continue getting your education?
3. You are an underclassman (Freshman, Sophomore) playing Collegiate Basketball. After your basketball season, you are GUARANTEED to be a late first-round pick in the NBA Draft (Pick 20-30). Do you leave college and go for the NBA Draft, or stay for another year and better your draft ranking and/or continue getting your education?
4. You are an underclassman (Freshman, Sophomore) playing Collegiate Basketball. After your basketball season, you are GUARANTEED to be a second-round pick in the NBA Draft (Pick 31-60). Do you leave college and go for the NBA Draft, or stay for another year and better your draft ranking and/or continue getting your education?

This was to get an overall opinion on people's views on whether they would leave college early as a collegiate athlete and an NBA prospect.

## **Data Presentation**

The interviews I had with Coach Sampson and Callero were recorded on my iPhone with the Voice Record Pro app, which has clear quality and playback ability. I also transcribed each interview in its entirety, which will be presented in an appendix in the later stages of this report.

My interview with Chris Eversley was conducted via direct messaging through Twitter because at the time Chris was finishing up his season in Belgium and was not available for a face-to-face interview or a recorded phone interview.

## **Delimitations**

Some limitations for the study include the fact that my study on sports success from college to the professional world relates to some of the experts I interviewed. They coaches gave their opinions and something that is very common in sports, especially in sports media, is that people's opinions may not be agreed with by the general public. Therefore, their opinions cannot and should not be generalized.

I only focused my research on Soccer, Football and Baseball. I decided to leave off other sports such as Baseball and others because getting experts in that field as well as conducting research for that sport specifically would have taken too much time than the less than 10 weeks was allotted for me to conduct this research for credit.

Lastly, because Chris Eversley was playing professional basketball in Belgium, we direct messaged each other through Twitter and because of the time difference between California and Brussels, there was constant hours in between each message, but it didn't really cause any problems.



# Chapter 4

## *Data Analysis*

This chapter will provide the descriptions of the experts interviewed in the study and summarize the respondents' answers to the questionnaire relating to each specific expert shown in chapter 3. The interviews were conducted as recorded interviews lasting approximately 15-20 minutes each, so I will be presenting the responses in direct quotations or paraphrased responses. After, the answers will be analyzed and compared to the original research questions and the existing literature on the topic as I reviewed in Chapter 2 of this research.

## **Description of Participating Experts**

### **Coaches**

Cal Poly Men's Basketball head coach, Joe Callero was one of the coaching experts for my study. Callero has been the head coach at Cal Poly since 2009, taking over the program after coaching at Puget Sound and Seattle University before hand. As Callero took over the program, he also was at the helm of teams that saw Cal Poly go to their first NCAA postseason tournaments since the basketball program moved to Division I in 1994. In 2013, the Mustangs reached the CIT tournament where they lost in the first round. The year after, the Mustangs made an improbable run in the Big West postseason tournament and won the tournament, thus clinching an automatic berth to the NCAA

Tournament for the first time in the programs history. As a 16 seed, the Mustangs defeated 16 seeded Texas Southern in the First Four, and then losing to 1 seed Wichita State in the second round.

The other coaching expert I interviewed was Cal Poly Men's Soccer head coach, Steve Sampson. Sampson coached the United States Men's National Team in the 1998 World Cup. Sampson also coached MLS side, LA Galaxy to domestic double in 2005, winning the MLS Cup and the U.S Open Cup in 2005. Sampson also won a national championship as the coach of Santa Clara University in 1989. Because Sampson has coached professional footballers like Brad Friedel, Cobi Jones and Alexi Lalas in the 1998 World Cup and Alan Gordon and United States all-time leader scorer, Landon Donovan with the Galaxy, Coach Sampson is a perfect candidate for my research because of the time he has spent in the professional game, and the experiences he has had in the coaching game, and it reflects in the answers I got from him.

## **Players**

I really wanted to get a player's perspective on the research I was conducted so I interviewed former Cal Poly basketball player, Chris Eversley. Eversley currently plays professionally overseas with the Kangoeroes Basket Willebroeck in Belgium. Originally from Chicago, Eversley first attending Rice University in 2009, but transferred to Cal Poly in 2011. Eversley would go on to become the 12<sup>th</sup> leading scorer in Cal Poly Men's Basketball history with 1,192 points and also rank 9<sup>th</sup> in the rebounding category. Eversley was the Big West Tournament MVP in 2014 with the Mustang team that won the Big West Championship and clinched the programs first ever berth to the NCAA Tournament. He was also a First-Team Big West selection in 2013 and a Second-Team

selection in 2014. After going undrafted in the 2014 NBA Draft, Eversley signed his first professional contract with the Westports Malaysia Dragons in the ASEAN Basketball League in Malaysia. As someone who has been through the system at Cal Poly under Callero and is currently playing professionally, I felt Chris Eversley would be the perfect candidate for my research.

## Questionnaire

Each expert was asked to respond to the following questions regarding Cal Poly's role in athletes who have ambitions of playing professionally and some more specific questions about a sports' culture when it comes to its players and the way it handles youth athletes. Keep in mind some of the questions in the questionnaire are not applicable to each expert candidate interviewed.

1. Does spending extra years in college help an athlete be better prepared for the world of professional sports?

Question 1 was asked to obtain some insight from the coaches and players I interviewed on their opinion on how effective college sports is on a young player, and whether it has any affect on the athlete if they go on to play professionally.

- Joe Callero: "Well I think there's probably an agreement throughout the world that any time you can spend more time preparing for your profession, that the likelihood for success is going to be improved" (Appendix A).
- Steve Sampson: "I think it varies by the individual. There's no black and white answer for that because certain individuals mature at a different level. Some are

ready right out of high school, some are ready after one or two years of college, and some are ready after their third” (Appendix B).

- Chris Eversley: “It gives you a chance to not only mature academically but socially” (Appendix C).

2. How has the jump from high school straight to professional sports panned out for a majority of those who’ve done it?

Question 2 was asked as more of a historical judgment call. In the NBA, they haven’t allowed a high school athlete to make the jump straight to the NBA since 2006, and this question allows an opinion from those I’ve interviewed about who they thought some of the best were to come straight from high school and maybe some of those whose careers didn’t pan out so well.

- Joe Callero: “Historically, you look back at the Darryl Dawkins era to the Kobe Bryant, one would argue both sides of it and there’s many guys, Bill Willoughby who didn’t make it, there’s many cases of someone who did not make it...

College is not for everybody, it shouldn’t be for everybody, it was never set out to be for everybody, it can’t be for everybody” (Appendix A).

- Steve Sampson: N/A
- Chris Eversley: “I don’t think it’s the right move. Every now and then a superstar comes from those ranks. But Kobe and LeBron are Kobe and LeBron, they really can’t be duplicated. The age rule put in place is huge because it helps keep things structured” (Appendix C).

3. How does Cal Poly help their athletes that have ambitions of playing at the next level?

Question 3 was asked to get a valid personal opinion of the coaches and player who have coached and played at Cal Poly and how they feel Cal Poly sets up the athlete for success on and off the court or field. Speaking to Coach Sampson and Callero and a former Cal Poly basketball player in Chris Eversley, they have the best opinion for this question as it pertains to the research question.

- Joe Callero: “We make it very simple, I want every recruit that I have and every current player I have to be a pro... a pro is someone that does something professionally gets paid. I didn’t say a pro basketball player, I said my goal is to make you a pro, and a pro is someone who can show up on time, work well with others, be flexible in your job description, continue to educate yourself, understand the hierarchy in the company’s policies” (Appendix A).
- Steve Sampson: “This is one of our recruiting tools is that all of our staff have coached at the professional level, and I’ve coached at the international level. Our schpiel and our recruiting efforts to the players that we are interested in is that we want to put them in a professional environment... come to Cal Poly, play at a division one program, get a great education, but also there’s a pathway to the pro’s? That’s a tremendous advantage for us from a recruiting standpoint” (Appendix B).
- Chris Eversley: “It gave us an opportunity to stand out. It’s better to be a big fish in a small pond than a small fish in a big pond. The Big West conference isn’t a

power 6 conference but it's still an opportunity to go out and make some noise in your own rested and people take notice" (Appendix C).

4. What are the opinions of the coaches and players on the one-and-done rule in basketball?

Question 4 was used to get an opinion on the NBA rule that requires basketball players to be one year removed from high school before entering their name in the NBA draft, and Chris went through that, and Joe has been apart of that since he began coaching. This rule has received mixed emotions throughout the basketball community, so it'll be interesting to get a take on what Joe and Chris think.

- Joe Callero: College should be for those who want to be in college. And when we have a graduation rate here in athletics comparable to the graduation rate to the university as a whole, a lot of kids drop out of college for financial reasons; they don't have enough money, or they go to a junior college, or work for a quarter or two, so it's not uncommon for any college student at any level to seek financial assistance and go to work for a while" (Appendix A).
- Steve Sampson: N/A
- Chris Eversley: "I'm a fan, I feel like it gives kids a way to get a year of maturity under their belt. They get to grow mentally and physically. Also, in basketball terms, they learn how to play in a system with structure. Some kids need to make the jump right away due to financial constraints and I feel like the one and done rule gives them the best of both worlds" (Appendix C).

5. How are young athletes handling the pressure of performing up to their potential in their early to late teens?

Question 5 was asked to gain insight of something that on the face of the question, looks like something that would be answered with on-court/field analysis, but really has more emphasis on issues young athletes deal with off the court or field. Asking Coach Sampson was a little bit different since youth soccer players have the option to go play professionally in academies across the world at a young age if the opportunity is presented to them. With that being said, I focused my question with Coach Sampson, on why Freddy Adu, a supposed once-in-a-generation American talent's career crashed so epically.

- Joe Callero: “The number 1 thing that kids have a tough time with in their college career is we do a lot of talk in training about nutrition, about weight training, about video. Probably the least developed area in college that we have to continue to look at is one's emotional ability to handle schoolwork, home-sickness, fatigue, sickness, losses” (Appendix A).
- Steve Sampson: “The type of conversations, the type of life experiences, the type of social interaction that those individuals have at those ages are different than one at 14 or 15 years of age, that being one of the issues. The second issue was that the player was made out to be the next big star in American soccer and so his ego became inflated and he had certain expectations going into that kind of environment, and when a 16 year old goes into the locker room of a professional team, you might believe that he was well received, and he was not” (Appendix B).

- Chris Eversley: “That could be anything and everything having to do with life and sports. Training, proper nutrition, learning about taxes and foreign income exclusions. There are a lot of things that I had to learn after I left college that apply to me specifically as a professional athlete” (Appendix C).

6. What can be done to help these athletes reach their potential in their youth/college?

Question 6 was asked as a suggestion for a solution to have young athletes in a situation where they are best placed to succeed both on and off the field or court. It was asked to really make my interviewees think about how they personally feel the best environment is for a young athlete to succeed on a personal level and together in a team setting.

- Joe Callero: “I think emotional stamina, emotional training, learning the game of life, the game of basketball, the game of school, and the game of health, keeping all of that in perspective is a huge portion of success and failures” (Appendix A).
- Steve Sampson: “It’s really, really important that those that are making these decisions of putting young players into a professional environment that they do their homework of studying what their life has been, what their maturity level has been, how their discipline is and whether or not outside of the field are they able to manage their affairs well to not do drugs and not drink and to eat properly and take care of their bodies” (Appendix B).
- Chris Eversley: “That could be anything and everything having to do with life and sports” (Appendix C).



7. If there were a young athlete being recruited who was considering Cal Poly and an athletic powerhouse like a Kentucky or Stanford, what would your pitch be to that recruit to bring them to Cal Poly?

Question 7 was asked to gain some insight to a little bit of the recruiting tools that these coaches use to get recruits to sign each year, and I personally wanted to find out what these coaches use to separate Cal Poly from the rest of the universities across the nation, even those that you could say would be better for the player because of the pedigree of the athletic program at another university.

- Joe Callero: I think some good examples we're able to show them that we have an environment here that is about development, more than just basketball development, emotional development, social development, academic development, physical development, nutritional development, I mean all of those are important if you want to make it successfully long-term. And it goes back to my line that I want you to be a pro and provide a pro-like mentality to success" (Appendix A).
- Steve Sampson: "This is one of our recruiting tools is that all of our staff have coached at the professional level, and I've coached at the international level. Our schpiel and our recruiting efforts to the players that we are interested in is that we want to put them in a professional environment" (Appendix B).
- Chris Eversley: "I would just stress the fact that the athlete could be the big fish in a small pond. Those schools have a larger name but won't necessarily provide you with the opportunity to be the man because you have teammates that are likely also getting NBA looks. At a school like Cal Poly, if you are going to be

the guy, things will fall primarily on your shoulders and it takes a certain type of player to do and want that” (Appendix C).

## Research Questions

The following seven research questions were similar to the questions asked to the specific interviewees in the questionnaire, but was used to gain insight to determine a general conclusion if athletes are better off staying in college as long as they can before going into professional sports. This part of chapter 4 focuses on the literature and how it relates to the research questions being evaluated. Keep in mind, some of the research questions in this report are not questions to be compared to in literature either because the question does not have any literature found to give information regarding the question or the question, like question 3 relates to a survey and is not correlated to any previous literature.

### **Research Question 1: Does spending extra years in college help an athlete be better prepared for the world of professional sports?**

- “Walter Webb, Coastal Christian's coach, says it wasn't his job -- and it wasn't possible -- to turn a quiet kid from Mississippi who had been a basketball commodity since junior high into a college student. Mr. Webb says he was there to help Mr. Butler prepare physically and personally for the NBA” (Fatsis, 2005, p. R11)
- “In that world, nearly every player who leaped to the NBA arrived after four seasons in the college game. These college vets understood the team concept. They had talked to reporters. They had sat through film sessions.

They had often waited a year or two before becoming starters” (Ramsey, 2014).

**Research Question 2: How has the jump from high school straight to professional sports panned out for a majority of those who’ve done it?**

- “Air Force coach Dave Pilipovich watched Korleone Young, one of the top high school superstars of the late 1990s. ‘He was a can't-miss prospect, right?’ Pilipovich said. ‘A Hall of Famer. Oh, my gosh. He was chiseled. He was strong. He was a man-child. You immediately said, 'This guy is a pro.' Young went straight to the NBA. And played a total of 15 minutes” (Ramsey, 2014)
- “And finally, who are we to say that an 18-year-old can't play in the NBA? He can fight in a war, vote for a president or be sentenced to death. But not play in the NBA?” (Jackson, 2012)

**Research Question 5: What are the opinions of the coaches and players of the one-and-done rule in basketball?**

- “The best players are gone before they even learn their way around campus. At NBA feeder programs like Kentucky, they make a mockery of the term ‘student athlete.’ Also gone are the personalities and grudge matches that used to make college hoops great reality television. No more Fab Five of Michigan against Duke with Christian Laettner and Bobby Hurley” (Rice, 2015)
- “NBA commissioner Adam Silver said he senses ‘a little bit of movement’ toward changing the league's one-and-done rule with the idea college

basketball players could have to stay in school at least two years” (Bohls, 2014).

- “Thanks to the NBA's 19-year-old rule, Xavier will have to either spend next basketball season either in college or overseas before he can play for pay in the USA. So no matter where he ends up, Xavier has already said he intends to be "one and done." One season in college or Europe and then he's done messing around with anything less than the NBA” (Sittler, 2009).
- “And, after the basketball world watched Kentucky (and its three one-and-done players) win a national championship, that same world now seems to be up in arms on how the one-and-done players are killing the spirit of college basketball” (Jackson, 2012).
- “[Greg] Oden and [Derrick] Rose left the college stage days after their freshmen seasons ended. NBA teams have selected 26 one-and-done players in the draft since 2006 -- including Oden and Rose, who became the top overall picks” (Robbins, 2010).
- “Having turned 19 years old in February after an additional year of prep school -- basically, his freshman year of college -- Maker believes he's eligible for the June draft. Maker spent his fifth year of high school at Athlete Institute in Mono, Ontario” (Noie, 2016)

**Research Question 6: How are young athletes handling the pressure of performing up to their potential in their early to late teens?**

- “I am trying to figure out, is it better for the NCAA to change their rules about requiring something beyond high school before the NBA, or is it better to look at a stipend during college?’ McCaskill said” (Raasch, 2015).
- “‘The thing that bothers me about it is that it's a farce and has nothing to do with what we're trying to do, and that's educating young people,’ Boyle said” (Ramsey, 2014).

**Research Question 7: What can be done to help these athletes reach their potential in their youth/ college?**

- “Because Pfeffer turned pro so early -- has there ever been a younger pro in this area in any sport? -- he'll always be sort of a walking lab experiment” (Jensen, 2015).
- “Not all kids are strong in academics. But they can be taught to work hard enough to earn an opportunity to attend college, or to improve their chances of making millions in the NBA. Mr. Webb says almost all of his players have gone on to college” (Fatsis, 2005).

## **Athletic Data**

The following tables are a form of data collection from Cal Poly Men’s Basketball head coach, Joe Callero, Cal Poly Men’s Soccer head coach, Steve Sampson, and former Cal Poly Basketball player and now professional basketball player, Chris Eversley in comparison to one another’s points made throughout the interviews which are

shown in a bigger picture via the appendix's which show the full transcribed interviews. The following tables present the interviewees answers by showing clear and concise points being made by each respondent.

**Research Question #1: Does spending extra years in college help an athlete be better prepared for the world of professional sports?**

This question was asked and studied to gain an opinion from those qualified to give it like Coach Callero, Sampson and Chris Eversley. It was really meant to gain an insight if a young athlete is better off staying in college or better off going to the pro's as quickly as he or she could to capitalize on their abilities and make money. It's an opinion on what is more valuable; the college education or the ability to make money off of your abilities as an athlete.

Table 1 summarizes the answers given by the three respondents on the issue. The soccer coach, Steve Sampson viewed the question as a case-by-case basis, really depending on the athlete and who they were as a person and evaluating their talent. Coach Callero and Chris Eversley's answers were similar, where Coach Callero used an example on how anyone, not necessarily a basketball player, benefit from practicing their craft before doing it for money. Chris Eversley answered the question and used it as an opportunity to express a youth's ability to mature on a physical and mental level in the college years to prepare someone for the physical and mental rigors of playing a professional sport.

Table 1

*Is Spending Extra Years in College Better*

Respondent	Why/ Why not	Example
Joe Callero	More time spent = Better chance at success	Musician, Mechanic
Steve Sampson	Depends on the athlete	18 year old being in a locker room of older players
Chris Eversley	Allows one to mature	Physical and Mental Maturity

**Research Question #2: How has the jump from high school straight to professional sports panned out for a majority of those who’ve done it?**

This question was also used as an opinion maker for my respondents to get their impressions on who some of the best and some of the worst were to go straight to professional sports. In basketball, players cannot go directly from high school into the NBA because of the One-And-Done rule that was implemented in 2006, but that varies for other sports like soccer, baseball and football; this question was focused on the sport of basketball.

Coach Sampson was not applicable for this question. Coach Callero makes a point that of all the successes there were in athletes like Kobe Bryant and LeBron James who went straight to the NBA from high school, that there were also a greater number of players who failed trying to make that same jump. Chris Eversley answered as some of the best like Kobe and LeBron James are guys that can’t be duplicated in a generation, and that’s what makes them special.

Table 2

*Judging the Jump from High School to the NBA*

Respondent	Judgment	Example
Joe Callero	College isn't for	Darryl Dawkins (Excelled)
	Everyone	Bill Willoughby (Failed)
Steve Sampson	N/A	
Chris Eversley	Not a fan. The best can't be duplicated	Kobe Bryant & LeBron James

**Research Question #3: Would the general population leave college early for a draft or stay in school longer to improve draft stock or continue getting their education?**

Question 3 was a way to reach the public as a hypothetical situation and get opinions. I used the website survey monkey and posted the link to the survey on Facebook for my family and friends to fill out. I set up the questions as a hypothetical scenario as if the person who was answering the survey was a freshman or sophomore college basketball player. Question 1 was asking if they would leave college for the NBA draft if they were guaranteed to be a top-5 pick in the next NBA draft. They would have to pick one of two options. They would 1. Leave college for the NBA draft or 2. Stay in college to improve your draft stock and/or continue getting your education. The next three questions would be formatted almost exactly like the first one except the draft guarantees would be different. Question 2 would guarantee that you would be drafted in

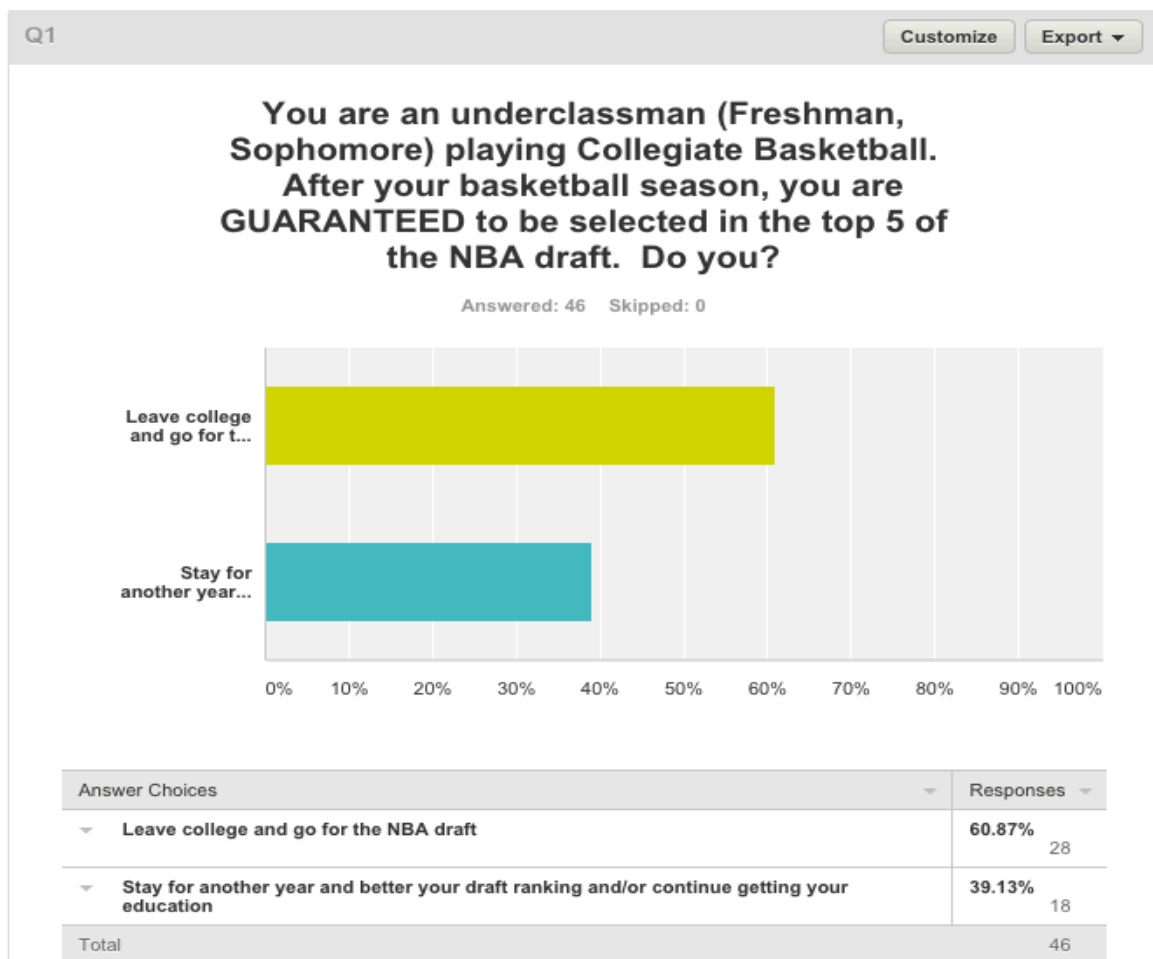


the lottery with picks 10-20, and asked once again if they would leave for the draft or stay in school. Question 3 guaranteed the player to be drafted late in the first round (picks 20-30) and question 4 guaranteed you would be drafted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round (picks 31-60).

46 people participated in the survey study and below are screenshots of the four questions I asked in the survey.

Table 3

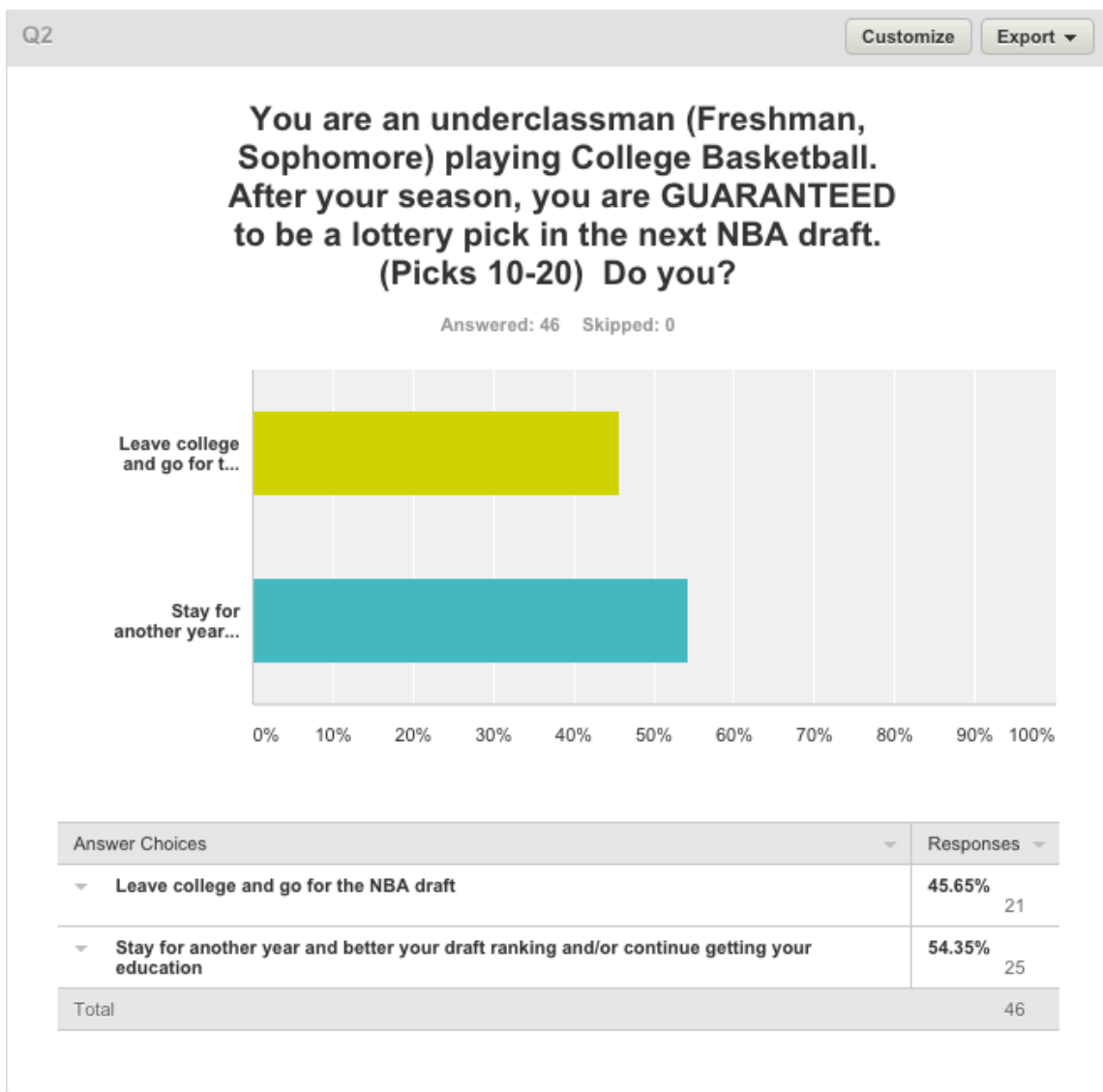
*Survey Question 1*



The responses to the first question surprised me a little bit. Without knowing whom my respondents of this survey were, I would've assumed that a vast majority of people would've left for the draft if they were guaranteed to be a top pick in the NBA draft. Only 60% of people deciding to leave took me by surprise.

Table 4

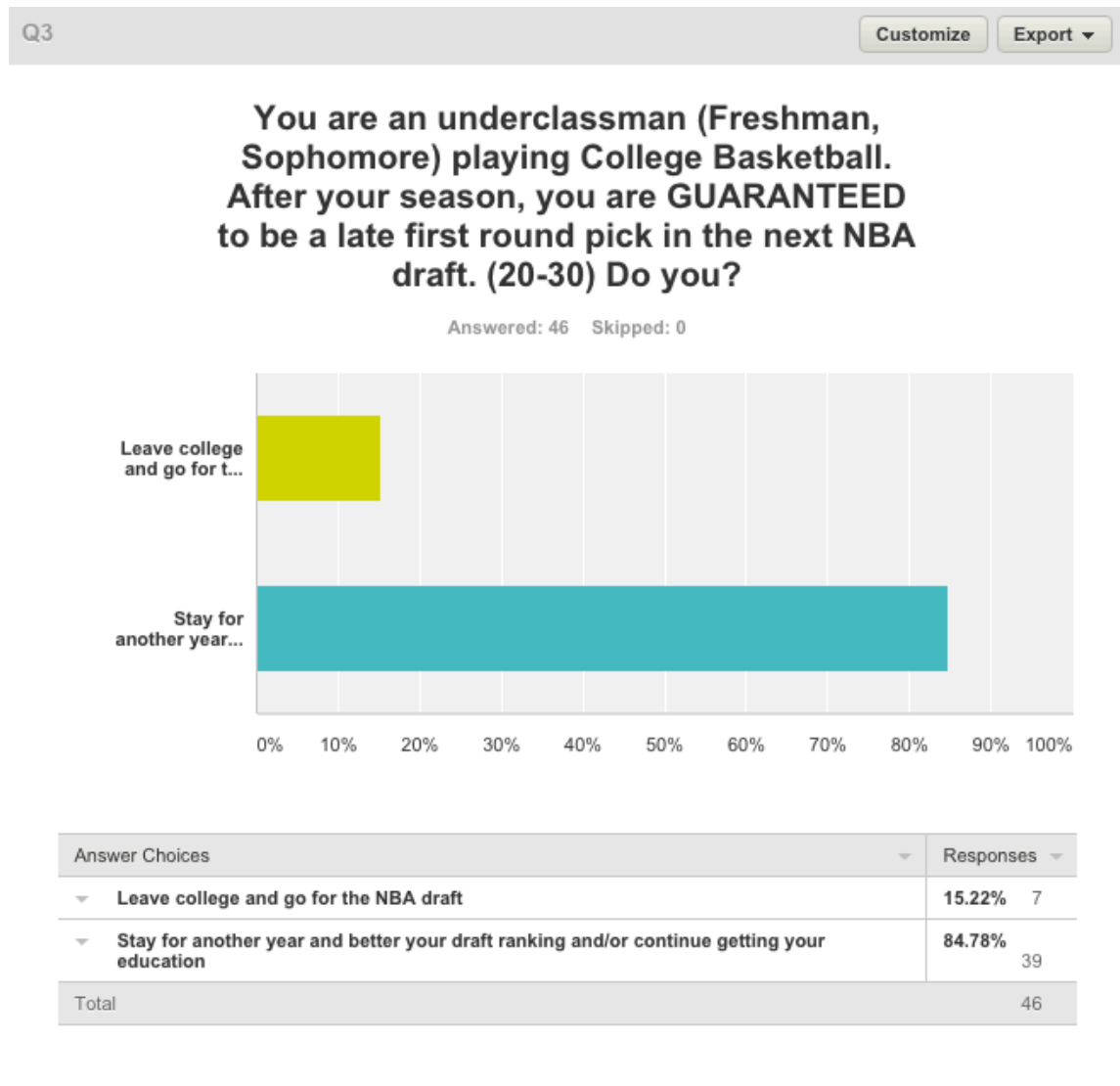
*Survey Question 2*



I expected the response to question 2 to be favorable to leaving for the draft, and it depends on the motives for my survey respondents if some of them value the education more than a guaranteed shot of being drafted in the NBA draft.

Table 5

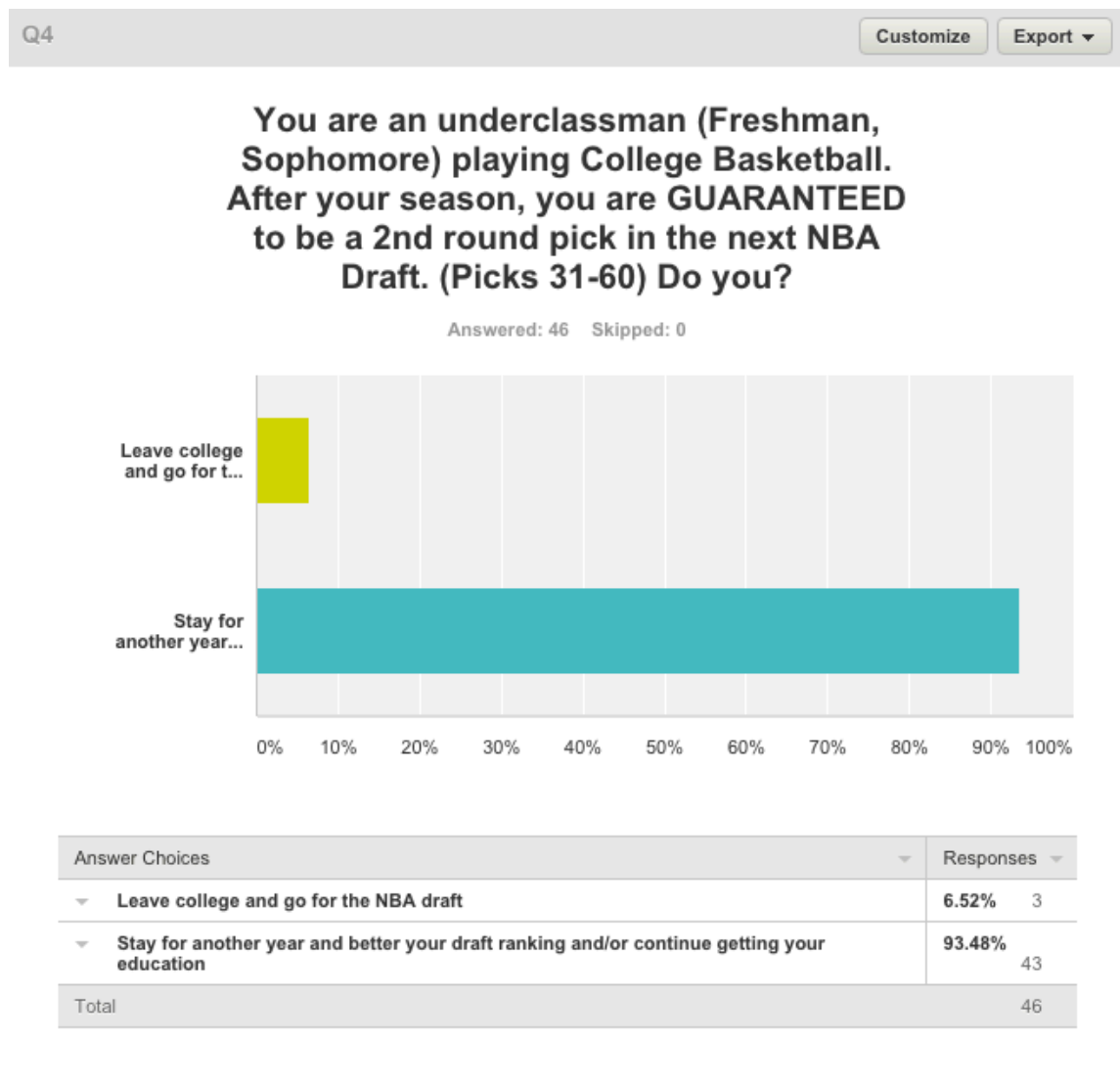
*Survey Question 3*



Now at this point in the survey, I expected some of the respondent behavior I got. When you lose out on the guaranteed money lottery and top 10 picks get in their rookie contracts, it would be understandable for a player to decide to go back to school to improve their draft stock and continue getting their education.

Table 6

*Survey Question 4*



Just like in question 3, my expectations were met considering the situation given in question 4. Most basketball players wouldn't go to the draft knowing they are going to be anything but a 1<sup>st</sup> round pick, especially if they haven't exhausted through their college eligibility yet.

**Research Question #4: What are thoughts of coaches and players on how Cal Poly helps their athletes who have ambitions of playing professionally?**

Most collegiate athletes, no matter what sport, are playing their respective sport in college because they want to eventually make it and play in the pro's. The answers for this question varied between my respondents. Because of Coach Sampson's previous experience coaching professionally both domestically in the MLS, and internationally with the United States National Team and with the Costa Rican National team, he really focused on his pitch that he knows how to coach professionals and train them, and uses that philosophy on the youth he coaches and have coached throughout the years.

Coach Callero focused his answer on molding his athletes and players into good people who mold well into the professional world, not even as basketball players, but as professional citizens of society and the workplace. Chris emphasized the fact that Cal Poly was a platform for players like himself to really stand out as an excellent player in a mid-major conference like the Big West.

Table 7

*Cal Poly on Athletes Hoping to go Pro*

Respondent	Judgment	Example
Joe Callero	Provide a pro-like Mentality	A pro basketball player or someone working in a factory
Steve Sampson	Coached at the Professional level	USMNT, Costa Rica and LA Galaxy
Chris Eversley	Be a big fish in a small pond	Cal Poly Big West Conference

**Research Question #5: What are the opinions of coaches and players on the one-and-done rule in basketball?**

The one-and-done rule is a hot topic in the world of college and professional basketball. Ever since the NBA created the rule starting with the 2006 NBA draft, high school players were now required to be one year removed from high school and had to be at least 19 years of age before entering the NBA draft. That didn't necessarily mean the player had to go to college. Players like Brandon Jennings didn't want to go to college, so he played a year professionally overseas and came back a year later for the 2009 NBA draft.

I asked Coach Callero and Chris Eversley this question to get another opinion on another hot topic in basketball and whether they thought the one-and-done rule was beneficial to the young basketball players of the world of achieving their dream of playing in the National Basketball Association. Coach Callero expresses that some kids

need to use the year to play college ball and then go to the NBA for financial reasons and that college is not for everyone. Chris is a fan of the one-and-done rule because it gives the athletes a chance to mature before playing in a professional environment. Coach Sampson was not applicable for this specific research question.

Table 8

*Opinions on the One-And-Done Rule*

Respondent	Judgment	Example
Joe Callero	College isn't for everyone	Some need the financial assistance right away
Steve Sampson	N/A	
Chris Eversley	A fan of the rule	Able to play in a system with structure

**Research Question #6: How are young athletes handling the pressure of performing up to their potential in their early to late teens?**

Question 6 was asked as an evaluation of players by Coach Callero and Chris Eversley of how they are dealing with their sport as they grow up into their late teens, and how life and other life events could effect the natural progression and development of a player.

Coach Callero really emphasized the value of emotional stamina in college for his players; being able to deal with the challenges that life will throw at you as you grow up in the world. Coach Sampson stressed being in a professional environment so his athletes can maximize their time effectively into becoming the best footballers they can be by being responsible with their school work and not drinking or doing drugs. Chris says it comes down to the little things that every athlete needs to succeed.

Table 9

*Handling the Pressure of Performing in Late Teens*

Respondent	Judgment	Example
Joe Callero	Emotional Stamina	Schoolwork, Homesickness fatigue, sickness, losses
Steve Sampson	Being responsible	Doing schoolwork, not drinking or doing drugs
Chris Eversley	Life and Sports (relating to an overseas athlete)	Nutrition, taxes, foreign income exclusions, etc.

**Research Question #7: What can be done to help these athletes reach their potential in their youth/college?**

Similar to question 6, question 7 asks for of a solution from the respondents about the issue of athletes across the world failing to reach their full potential by the time their college years are done in terms of basketball. In soccer, the potential of a youngster really depends on how often they are getting competitive game time, not necessarily



training with a professional team, where long spells on the bench could stall a players ability to grow.

Coach Sampson focused on the players being in a professional environment from the beginning, to be able to train and maximize the athlete’s potential and providing resources that allows them to continue to progress during the times where the college team doesn’t train. Coach Callero focuses on the emotional training which leads to being able to coach the team better if they are emotionally strong, especially with the ups and downs of a college basketball season. Chris Eversley, being one of the best players in the history of the Men’s Basketball program, focused on being able to handle the weight of being the “guy”, once again relating to being the big fish in a small pond.

Table 10

*How to Help Athletes Reach Their Potential*

Respondent	Judgment	Example
Joe Callero	Emotional training	Learning the game of school, basketball, life
Steve Sampson	Being placed in a Professional environment	Types of training, council Connections with MLS teams
Chris Eversley	Being the “guy”	Having the weight on your shoulders

# Chapter 5

## *Discussion and Recommendations*

### **Summary**

This study was conducted as a response to some of the highly touted prospects in high school and college and why some of them fail when they enter the world of professional sports. Today, teams draft these prospects looking for sure things; the reality of the situation is that a #1 pick in a draft may not be a sure thing, there have been many cases of former #1 overall picks being washed up and not in the league anymore like Kwame Brown, Jamarcus Russell. It was essential to gain some insight and knowledge from coaches and players who understand how the sports world revolves and how the transition to professional sports is for these young athletes.

To understand what these athletes go through and how these coaches think, two Cal Poly coaches and one former Cal Poly athlete were interviewed based on a variable questionnaire to answer the following research questions for the study:

1. Does spending extra years in college help an athlete be better prepared for the world of professional sports?
2. How has the jump from high school straight to professional sports panned out for a majority of those who've done it?
3. Would the general population leave college early for a draft or stay in school longer to improve draft stock or continue getting their education?
4. What are the thoughts of coaches and players on how Cal Poly helps their athletes who have ambitions of playing professionally?

5. What are the opinions of the coaches and players of the one-and-done rule in basketball?
6. How are young athletes handling the pressure of performing up to their potential in their early to late teens?
7. What can be done to help these athletes reach their potential in their youth/college?

This questionnaire created a variety of great responses from each of the respondents and was compared to the literature on analyzing athletic success from youth to professional sports.

### **Discussion**

There have been connection made between my respondents responses and the literature found in chapter 2 based on the data collected in chapter 4, therefore, it is possible to make conclusions regarding the following research questions.

#### **Research Question #1: Does spending extra years in college help an athlete be better prepared for the world of professional sports?**

Coach Joe Callero compared the question to anyone in any profession practicing his or her craft to become better at it. He made the case that anyone who spends more time practicing something will be better in the long run, a musician, actor, etc. will become better if they practice. Coach Steve Sampson said the situation depends on the athlete because each athlete is at a different maturity level than another. From leaving high school into the professional world, he noted that an 18-21 year old going into a locker room with people much older than him could have an affect on the way they play. Chris Eversley gave a response similar to Coach Callero's in the sense that he mentioned

that staying for longer in school allows one to mature both physically and mentally to be prepared for the professional world.

The literature focuses more on the issue some athletes have with the NCAA. “College Athletes are beginning to speak out against the current sport model that treats college athletes as unpaid amateurs, while the National Collegiate Athletic Association continues to stand behind that model” (Brown 2014). Brown points out that some athletes are forced financially to obtain quick money by leaving school early for the professional sports world even though they may not be ready.

Overall, it’s possible to conclude that an athlete would be better off staying in college for as long as they can to develop their skills and obtain an education before going professional.

**Research Question #2: How has the jump from high school straight to professional sports panned out for a majority of those who’ve done it?**

Even though Coach Sampson was not applicable for this question, Coach Callero argues that college was never made to be for everyone, and that it should not be for everyone. Chris Eversley was never a fan, mentioning that some of the best basketball players to go straight from the NBA from high school could never be duplicated.

The literature brings up an option that high school basketball players, who can no longer go straight to the NBA from high school via the one-and-done rule established in 2005, by playing professionally overseas for a year because, “They need to be a year removed from high school athletics” (Raasch 2015).

Overall, it is nearly impossible to determine if going straight to the NBA from high school was a good or bad idea because you had some of the greatest to play the

game go straight from high school in Kobe Bryant and LeBron James, and as Coach Callero mentioned, there were some guys, like Bill Willoughby who did the same but never saw their careers take off professionally.

**Research Question #3: Would the general population leave college early for a draft or stay in school longer to improve their draft stock or continue getting their education?**

This research question was not asked to the experts and had no previous literature focused on it. This question was the basis for a survey conducted from the general population and was created on a website called Survey Monkey.

Refer to chapter 4 for the specific questions asked, but the basis of the survey was asking the public if they would leave college early if they were guaranteed a specific spot in the next draft or if they would stay at school for another year to develop and/or continue getting their education.

Based off the results of survey, which once again you can view in more detail in chapter 4, a majority of the people who took the survey would only leave school for the draft if they were guaranteed to be a top-5 pick. And even then, only about 60% of the respondents would leave for the draft in that situation.

It is safe to conclude that the people who took the survey, assuming that they also represent answers for the rest of the general population, that they value their education or developing their skills further as opposed to going to the draft as a lottery pick, late first round pick or a 2<sup>nd</sup> round pick in a draft.

**Research Question #4: What are thoughts of coaches and players on how Cal Poly helps their athletes who have ambitions of playing professionally?**

Because of the backgrounds of each expert, this question really offered different insight from each expert relating to the issue. Coach Callero wants his players to develop a pro-like mentality whether that is playing basketball professionally or even being a sales agent at enterprise rent-a-car. Coach Sampson focused his answer on the fact that he and his entire coaching staff have coached professionally previously and he can offer that professional insight to his players. Chris Eversley mentioned that playing at Cal Poly is like being a big fish in a small pond and reiterated that if a player is good enough, that someone will find them and is able to place them in a professional setting in sports.

Unfortunately, throughout each of the databases used to find literature relating to the research questions developed, none of the databases had any literature regarding Cal Poly specifically, but the experts' information allows for a formidable conclusion to be made.

Overall, these coaches at Cal Poly have the background to have an idea on what and how they want to focus their coaching and teaching onto their players. Whether that idea is not necessarily basketball based like Coach Callero's or completely sport-specific based in the case with Coach Sampson, where each athlete is in an atmosphere where the coaches will work with you to help maximize your abilities and your skills before going pro.

**Research Question #5: What are the opinions of the coaches and players of the one-and-done rule in basketball?**

Overall, Coach Callero and Chris Eversley's responses to this question were similar. Coach Callero showed sympathy towards the individuals that have to play one year of college basketball and bolt to the NBA due to financial struggles because some

athletes suffer due to the strictness of NCAA rules relating to athletes receiving improper benefits. Chris is a fan of the rule because it allows for a player to get a year of structure in their lives before going professional. Coach Sampson was not applicable for this question, as it relating specifically to a basketball eligibility rule.

The literature mentions that a lot of college coaches do not support the one-and-done rule as it takes away from the bigger picture of college athletics. Colorado Head Coach, Tad Boyle mentions, “The thing that bothers me about it is that it’s a farce and has nothing to do with what we’re trying to do, and that’s educating young people... I don’t know what to do about it. We’re never going to be able to stop it. We don’t have any teeth” (Ramsey 2014).

Overall, it can be concluded that the one-and-done rule is received differently in the nation. The schools like Kentucky, who build their program off of bringing in prospects who usually stay for no longer than one year, get all the best athletes in the nation and then send them off to the NBA after being on campus for 8-9 months. Some schools are built for that kind of program. But other schools value the education aspect, where they want to allow their athletes to get their degree before going to play professionally.

**Research Question #6: How are young athletes handling the pressure of performing up to their potential in their early to late teens?**

As basketball minds, Coach Callero and Chris Eversley’s answers were similar. Coach Callero emphasized the theory of having emotional stamina as a college athlete; being able to deal with factors like fatigue, losses, social aspects, and other aspects that a player must control off the court. Chris mentioned as a player that one must be ready for

life after college such as knowing how to do your taxes, and in his case as a professional basketball player overseas, how to deal with foreign income exclusions, so a player doesn't have to worry about those aspects in life and can focus their attention on basketball. Coach Sampson focused his answer on the athlete being able to be responsible off the field. Knowing when to do their homework, eating well, and staying away from drugs and alcohol and anything else that would affect their ability to perform at the best of their abilities.

The literature mentions a lot of soccer relating to this issue, mainly with the MLS being able to bring in youth as young as 14 or 15 into the league to play for their professional teams. Specifically with former youth talent Zach Pfeffer, much like some of his kind were scouted as being too good to play college or academy soccer before they got their license. "Playing college soccer would almost be too easy for him now" (Jensen 2015). In most cases, these players fail to live up to their potential because as Coach Sampson mentions, "The type of conversations, the type of life experiences, the type of social interaction that those individuals have at those ages are different than one at 14 or 15 years of age" (Appendix B).

In conclusion it is safe to conclude that being in the right environment, as a young athlete would be the best situation for their career, along with getting good advice. Coach Sampson and his staff offer that professional environment in his training sessions without the hype of a good young talent in the eyes of the media in professional soccer. But dealing with things such as partying, drugs, alcohol, proper nutrition, etc. is something that is absolutely crucial for an athlete to understand before they play professionally where knowing how to deal with those situations is already expected.



**Research Question #7: What can be done to help these athletes reach their potential in their youth or in college?**

This question is similar to question 6 as a follow-up asking the respondents for more of a solution of how to help their athletes be the best they can be. Coach Callero related again to his theory of emotional stamina and training and how an athlete learns how to deal with off-court situations that will allow them to succeed later in life. Chris Eversley answered similarly to a situation he was in with the team when he was playing at Cal Poly, where he held most of the weight of the team on his shoulders as the team reached the NCAA tournament for the first time in the program's history. Coach Sampson related his answer to having the athlete always be in a professional environment in college and even during the summer when the team doesn't train. His staff knows how to get the best out of his players due to their professional experience, and can help these players reach their goals of playing professionally with their contacts with MLS teams and clubs around the world.

In terms of the literature, there wasn't much information regarding this specific research question of offering ideas of how these athletes could be helped to succeed. What was found was an interesting take on what good or bad things would come if these college athletes would be paid, a big topic that has been debated around in college sports for the past few years. "This comment argues for a compromise between the current amateurism model and the oft-proposed "pay-for-play" model of college sports, in which college athletes are paid for their athletic participation" (Brown 2014). What kind of temptations could be brought from the idea of an athlete having money for playing? Would they spend the money on food or drugs or alcohol?

In conclusion, this issue really comes down to the maturity level of the players themselves. They need to know to put themselves in the best situation to succeed on and off the court or field; to resist the temptation of drugs or alcohol, and to know that maybe even a beer or a shot could be the difference between being able to play a full 90 in a soccer match or being substituted due to lack of fitness.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

At the conclusion of this study, data has been collected through research and interviews have been analyzed relating to the topic of athletic success from youth and college into the world of professional sports. Some recommendations of practice would be advised to coaches of these athletes, where they can focus on the ideas that Joe Callero and Steve Sampson enforce on their players to get the best out of them on and off the court or field. Some of which include making sure the players understand that they can take their talents as far as they want to take them if they put in the work and if they can make sure they stay the course and avoid situation and substances that could deter the athlete from that path, as well as placing their athletes in a professional environment from day one to mock the way a professional team would train and practice.

### **Years Spending In College**

Every person, athlete or not, have their own motives for the actions and decisions they make. The same case is applicable for athletes in attending a university and playing

for a program. Some are good enough to go to the athletic powerhouses of the country, and some have not yet fully developed their skills to attract that kind of national attention.

With that being said, it depends on what the athlete wants. Are they concerned with getting an education and a degree in case a professional career doesn't pan out? Or is an athlete so confident in their abilities that they know before they decide where they will attend college, that they are going to spend only one year at that institution?

### **How Cal Poly Helps**

From everything gathered, coaches at Cal Poly really focus on the fact that the university is an elite educational institution, which is something used to recruit high school athletes to the college. The diversity within the coaching staff, even though only two sports were focused on for this study, show the different priorities of each coach of the different programs and what they want their players to gain from playing for them and playing at a college like Cal Poly.

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo is ranked the #1 top public school of regional universities in the west according to US News.com. According to the career services page on the Cal Poly website, 86% of graduates from the 2013-2014 class are employed or are in graduate school. 98% of those people were employed within nine months from graduation, and 94% of those people are working in jobs related to their majors. With all of that being said, the Cal Poly degree is incredibly valuable in the workforce, and if a professional sports career doesn't work out, former Cal Poly athletes shouldn't be worried about finding a career.

## **Study Conclusion**

In conclusion, there is no definitive answer on how many years a college athlete should be in school, or be in school at all before going to play their sport in a professional environment. Because this study only focused on mainly Basketball and Soccer, this study can be further researched on to develop a better understanding of other sports and their players like baseball, football, etc., due to their different eligibility rules for the National Football League and Major League Baseball. The basis for determining the correct amount of time an athlete should spend in school before making the jump to professional sports is variable; research can be done to find statistical anomalies to support a theory of the history of determining how successful these athletes have been if they left straight after high school, their freshman or sophomore years, or after their junior or senior years in college. What can be concluded is that every athlete needs to mature to the point where they can live on their own, handle their money responsibly, and be able to focus on what they are being paid to do. With that being said, every human being in the world matures and develops at a different pace, so saying a definitive number for how many years an athlete should stay in school is not possible. For those athletes that attend a university, having coaches who have experience coaching successfully like Joe Callero and Steve Sampson, who know how to put their players in the best environments to succeed as well as teaching them how to be responsible off the court or field is something that cannot be matched, and is most valuable to the development of a young athlete.

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# Appendix A

Transcribed Interview: Joe Callero

The following interview is with Cal Poly Men's Basketball Coach, Joe Callero to get an expert opinion on college basketball players and how they transition from College to the NBA or overseas leagues and how Cal Poly helps those athletes succeed at the next level.

Interviewer: David Kline

Respondent: Cal Poly Men's Basketball head coach, Joe Callero

Date of Interview: 5/7/16

## *Interview Transcription:*

David Kline: "Coach, in your experiences as a D-1 Head Coach, does extra years spent in college better prepare an athlete for the world of professional sports?"

Joe Callero: "Well I think there's probably an agreement throughout the world that any time you can spend more time preparing for your profession, that the likelihood for success is going to be improved. It doesn't matter if I was a mechanic, if I got more training, I would have a chance to be more successful as a mechanic. If I were a musician, the more I would train as a musician, I would probably have a better chance of succeeding with my band. So I think it's obviously advantageous to stay in school, to get more training, to be older, to be successful."

JC: "My personal standpoint is that in the United States and in the world as a whole, the market is driven by the demands of one's ability to perform their task or potentially perform their task. We don't stop actors from making money at 14 or 12. We don't stop singers or artists. We don't stop scientists, we don't stop computer programmers. If you have the talent at an exceptionally young age, in many cases we don't stop athletes in golf or tennis that have been on the tour since they were 14, or 15 or 16. So I'm opposed to having a limitation on basketball to have a specific one-year minimum or two years. I think that any student athlete, any student, any person should be allowed to leave their current position, like a faculty member can currently change and decide that they want to

leave Cal Poly, sometimes they have to buy-out a contract, but I don't think it changes and I think often we put athletics into a mindset that we become the moral police on what is appropriate for somebody to do, what's best for them, for their life is. Child actors and actresses have been going on since they were 6 years old or 8 years old, they've been home-schooled. So I always say when you take an athletic argument, make sure you spread it to the other genres out there."

DK: "Now what is your opinion on the one-and-done rule?"

JC: "The one-and-done rule is not a college rule, It's an NBA rule saying you have to be 19 and one full year removed from high school. I think it's gratuitous the NBA gets the gratuity of the NCAA marketing of the athlete. I do like the NCAA rule with baseball, where if you're not interested in going to college, then you can sign that contract immediately and that should be allowed. The NBA collective bargaining agreement allows them to push that back a year and of course the collective bargaining agreement would like to have that at 18, so the perspective athlete could get another year on their pro contract and the NBA would just develop the player. College should be for those who want to be in college. And when we have a graduation rate here in athletics comparable to the graduation rate to the university as a whole, a lot of kids drop out of college for financial reasons; they don't have enough money, or they go to a junior college, or work for a quarter or two, so it's not uncommon for any college student at any level to seek financial assistance and go to work for a while. And I think that's what happens many times in college athletics."

DK: "Now back in the days where kids in high school could make the jump to the NBA, how would you judge the majority of those who have made that transition?"

JC: "Historically, you look back at the Darryl Dawkins era to the Kobe Bryant, one would argue both sides of it and there's many guys, Bill Willoughby who didn't make it, there's many cases of someone who did not make it. There's many cases of students here that did not make it, the mechanics, the musicians, the childhood actors that didn't make it. So I look at all of those as Kobe Bryant did pretty well; straight to the NBA and played 20 years with one franchise, made over \$200 million. College is not for everybody, it shouldn't be for everybody, it was never set out to be for everybody, it can't be for everybody. So I think when we start applying our own personal value of what everyone should do, then I think we lose track of clear-thinking. Who wouldn't want more training, or be more mature? I have a very strong opinion on this: if that is the case, let's make sure that the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, the Marines stop recruiting at high schools. So I was a high school counselor, and 18 year-olds are being recruited to join and be shot at and we're saying they have the full capacity to carry a gun and pull a trigger, then I would think that an 18 year-old would have the capacity to decide if he wants to go to the NBA. Now no one has come up with a better argument than that one. We're allowing them to walk through jungles, holding handguns, get shot at, have landmines blow their legs off, yet saying we should somehow be the moral police that say someone isn't old enough to go play basketball"



DK: “ Speaking about Cal Poly specifically, how does Cal Poly help their athletes that have ambitions of playing at the next level?”

JC: “ We make it very simple, I want every recruit that I have and every current player I have to be a pro. And I ask them how many of you want to be pro’s. Every single one of them want to be a pro. Then I explain that a pro is someone that does something professionally gets paid. I didn’t say a pro basketball player, I said my goal is to make you a pro, and a pro is someone who can show up on time, work well with others, be flexible in your job description, continue to educate yourself, understand the hierarchy in the company’s policies. Now that many be playing professional basketball in Belgium, some that may be going on to graduate school, some that may be working for Enterprise rent-a-car. The qualities it says to be a pro are having the certain skills that are compatible for all employers. There are certain behaviors that are not tolerated in any communities. What you put on social media, how you treat a co-worker, how you listen to your bosses, your professionalism, your understanding of the job requirement. Basketball and your NBA team just happens to be your employer, or your professional team in Belgium just happens to be your employer is really not that different then lets say than someone who has a job with the Boeing corporation and is an engineer. There are certain requirements and training that they make you go through. I like to take every question and put it back to the general student.”

DK: “ What do you think could be done to help athletes hit their potential during their collegiate career?”

JC: “ The number 1 thing that kids have a tough time with in their college career is we do a lot of talk in training about nutrition, about weight training, about video. Probably the least developed area in college that we have to continue to look at is one’s emotional ability to handle schoolwork, home-sickness, fatigue, sickness, losses. I have a Masters in counseling, and I say show me a guy who handles the set-backs and failures and I’ll show you a guy who’s pretty good at something; it’s not about your successes. I told this year’s team, we struggled with losses, and we were able to continue to compete at a high level, and I’m proud of this year’s team’s ability to persevere as my team that went on to the NCAA tournament; and the reason that team went on to the NCAA tournament was because they persevered. I think emotional stamina, emotional training, learning the game of life, the game of basketball, the game of school, and the game of health, keeping all of that in perspective is a huge portion of success and failures.”

DK: This is more of a recruitment question. Hypothetically, if there was an athlete who was considering an athletic powerhouse, like a Kentucky or what not, and they were considering here at Cal Poly, what would your pitch to them be to come to Cal Poly over an athletic powerhouse?”

JC: “ First we have to look at if they’re in a situation where it simply may be a one-and-done, I think one of the things you have to look at is what are your priorities? If you truly believe that this is all about basketball and only about basketball, then I would recommend them to go to Kentucky because the decision is one-dimensional; we’re not

the right school for you. Because I would say to them, if you were coming to Cal Poly, you are going to represent yourself academically, you're going to attend your classes. Then we have to look at are you going to value the college town, the college location. Let's say the kid is a California resident, he's looking at Kentucky or Cal Poly, do you want your parents to be able to come up and see your games? Do you want your family and friends close by? Do you want to be a student athlete that does something unique at Cal Poly? When I got the job 7 years ago, I had to paint a picture. Being the first team to go to the NCAA tournament, saying there's been 107 years of basketball and 87 of those years were not Division I, now we're 20 years Division I, who's going to be the first team to get to the NCAA tournament? One thing I would always say to those guys that want to be leaders and I say, why not be a leader at Cal Poly and be the first one that's an NBA prospect that goes to Cal Poly? We're talking to our current recruits, we've been to the NCAA tournament, we've won a game, but we haven't placed anyone in the NBA. And I'm looking to recruit a student athlete that is able to A. Graduate. B. Help us get back to the NCAA tournament. C. Be a great representative of the community and D. That they ultimately become an NBA prospect, and that would be another glass ceiling for us. You look at us recently, you say Weber State, Lehigh, the Trailblazers backcourt, you look at some unbelievably quality players coming out of mid-major programs, you guys are getting play-time earlier, the smaller school environment, where the pressure is more about development than immediately being a star and leaving right away. I think some good examples we're able to show them that we have an environment here that is about development, more than just basketball development, emotional development, social development, academic development, physical development, nutritional development, I mean all of those are important if you want to make it successfully long-term. And it goes back to my line that I want you to be a pro and provide a pro-like mentality to success."

DK: "Now tell me why do you think some of these mid-major players like a C.J McCollum or a Damian Lillard, why they succeeded in college enough to the point where they are great NBA players?"

JC: "Well I think the main thing is that they are 6'4" and under. There are simply 4 times as many players that are 6'4" and under and you can see their jump shot. But when there's a thousand players 6'4" and under, not all of them are going to go to top-50 schools, and so you're able to find students, 18 years-old that have the potential, but maybe don't have the size or athleticism. It's easy to look at the top 20 players and go, 'are you kidding me?' I mean DeAndre Ayton, number 1 player in the country, 17 year-old, he's a one-and-doner. I just saw him play last week and he's an NBA player now at 17. He would be a starter for half of the NBA teams right now, he's seven feet tall, handles the ball and shoots the three. He's more polished than Ben Simmons out of LSU, he's physically more dominating and a better shooter. I saw him as a Junior and it was unbelievable, and now I'm going he's more than unbelievable. He's number one in the nation by another niche."

DK: "Coach, talk to me about one of your former players, Chris Eversley. What's allowing him to succeed in Europe right now?"

JC: “ Chris is a special story because Chris has that first quality I mentioned early on, he has the emotional stamina. Chris is a Chicago kid, grew up and commuted from the south side of Chicago to downtown to go to school. He went to Rice University; things didn’t work out there. He transferred to Cal Poly and had to sit a year, he matured, he worked on his game, but Chris has a resiliency to him, and enthusiasm and his approach to the game and his life. He played in Malaysia for five to six months, came back and found an opportunity in Brussels, Belgium. He is going to make it because Chris is very adaptable. He has the emotional stamina to deal with different countries, different foods, different cultures, different people, different coaches, and I think that’s one of the biggest keys to succeed internationally.”

DK: “ Do you see him jumping on to an NBA training camp anytime soon?”

JC: “ He’s one of the guys that has the chance in the next two to three years, whether it happens this year or in the following years; he was injured for most of this year, he had some up and downs this season. When Chris can put together a season, where he is able to stay completely healthy and put up the numbers, probably a window between the age of 24 and 28, when you’re at your physical prime, I do think he’ll have a great chance to open that door to an NBA training camp. The problem that leads to is that will that ultimately get me a 10-day contract or is that going to get me a full-year contract, and once you’re playing overseas and making a little bit of money with a team you might look at ‘Well I’m going to be making more money if I play overseas than I would be playing in the D-League waiting for a 10-day contract.’ Recently in the Big West, James Ennis was drafted by the Miami Heat, and then he was called up after his 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year, first on a 10-day contract and then was picked up full-time, so it’s happening more and more that the NBA is looking at guys internationally that ‘Okay this guy was this good at age 21 and now he’s at the age of 24 and he’s improved that much more.’ Even in the NBA and Kyle Lowry. Some guys just improve over the course of five years as much as they do from high school and up. It’s a big thing about how much kids improve physically in high school, improve emotionally in college, and then they improve their social balance after that. Are you able to balance family and health issues and things like that so it doesn’t distract from your ability to get better, because it’s hard to get better. Do you golf at all?”

DK: “ Every now and then.”

JC: “ You take someone who has an 18 handicap, it’s pretty easy to be an 18 and take five strokes off that. But taking an 13 and getting down to an 8 is exponentially harder, and you can relate that to basketball. It takes twice the hours to get better each time in basketball. So this kid can really shoot the ball, so for him to improve his shooting, it’s going to be difficult because it’s already a very good shot. The hours that Stephen Curry has to put in to improve his game, so unbelievable, for him to improve his 3-point percentage, are you kidding me?”

DK: “It’s already so high.”

JC “ It’s like in golf, where is Tiger Woods going to go? I mean you can try new clubs and the surgeries and he’s the best and it’s so hard, and the ability for one’s improvement is so minimal.”

# Appendix B

Transcribed Interview: Steve Sampson

The following interview is with Cal Poly Men's Soccer Coach, Steve Sampson to get an expert opinion on college and high school soccer players and how they transition from College or High School to the MLS or other professional leagues overseas and how Cal Poly helps those athletes succeed at the next level.

Interviewer: David Kline

Respondent: Cal Poly Men's Soccer Head Coach, Steve Sampson

Date of Interview: 5/24/16

## *Interview Transcription:*

David Kline: "Alright Coach, does spending extra years in college help an athlete be better prepared for professional sports?"

Steve Sampson: "I think it varies by the individual. There's no black and white answer for that because certain individuals mature at a different level. Some are ready right out of high school, some are ready after one or two years of college, and some are ready after their third. I'm not just talking about from a skills standpoint, but also from a psychological standpoint. Whether they're actually capable of surviving amongst players that are between 22 and 35 years of age. So an 18 year-old that finds himself in a locker room with 22 to 35 year olds, it takes a while for them to adapt. And we've found here in the United States, based on my experiences, that the adaptation period is longer for Americans than for example, Europeans. Europeans or those from outside the United States tend to have more responsibility at the age of 15, 16, or 17 and they are much more independent and relied upon whether it's to support the family or for them to go out and make a living on their own at a young age, and that tends to mature them much faster than those players the same age in the United States."

DK: "And in your experiences as a coach both professionally and at the collegiate level, why are these players who are such highly-touted youngsters failing to reach their potential?"

SS: “For many reasons, you can have a player that is technically gifted but isn’t quite ready to live on his own or live with others. You might have an individual that doesn’t know how to continue to meet the challenges of playing at the professional level, whether it’s the physical challenges or the psychological challenges, the day-to-day grind of competing. That’s why it’s really, really important that those that are making these decisions of putting young players into a professional environment that they do their homework of studying what their life has been, what their maturity level has been, how their discipline is and whether or not outside of the field are they able to manage their affairs well to not do drugs and not drink and to eat properly and take care of their bodies. There’s so many criteria that go into making that kind of decision; it is not a study of individuals that should ever be taken lightly done in depth and in great detail, and where you literally go into the home and observe what’s going on in the home before you make that decision.”

DK: “Let’s take on person in particular I would like to talk about. Freddy Adu. He was supposed to be the ‘American Messi’. What happened to him? Why did he never succeed?”

SS: “I think it was a massive blunder on the part of US Soccer and Major League Soccer. This was a young man that was 14 years of age, hadn’t finished high school, probably should’ve been moved to an academy program in Europe where he could have honed his skills and be put in an academic environment with people his own age or maybe with individuals that are one to two years older than he is. He was thrust into an environment with D.C United where again, he was in the same locker room and interacting socially with 22 to 35 year olds. The type of conversations, the type of life experiences, the type of social interaction that those individuals have at those ages are different than one at 14 or 15 years of age, that being one of the issues. The second issue was that the player was made out to be the next big star in American soccer and so his ego became inflated and he had certain expectations going into that kind of environment, and when a 16 year old goes into the locker room of a professional team, you might believe that he was well received, and he was not. And the reality is that the player is there to take the position of someone else, and those players are going to make him earn everything that he gets, and if that kid can’t survive under those conditions, he’ll get found out pretty quickly and frankly that’s part of the maturation process and the developmental process; can he actual survive under those conditions? And I would say it’s incredibly difficult for a 15 year old to survive in those conditions because the lack of maturity, the lack of life experience, the fact that he was underdeveloped from a physical standpoint, it was going to take him three or four years before he was actually capable of competing and starting and making a name for himself in the MLS. I know the coaching staff that had to deal with that situation and what ended up happening was he spent a lot of time on the bench, the player got arrogant that he wasn’t playing and he became a cancer in the locker room. The players around him were forcing him to pay his dues, and he didn’t think he had to pay his dues because he felt entitled.”

DK: “Would you advise a good youngster to join an academy team in Europe or suggest that he plays in college here in the states?”

SS: “It depends on what his goals are. If his goals are to play professionally, then you have to ask the question, if he gets offered a contract at the age of 18, lets say. Is he going to get enough significant playing time where he can continue developing? Training at 18 or 19 and not seeing significant playing time, it makes it very difficult to develop quickly. You have to have the opportunity to see game time, to measure yourself under match conditions and you’re better off going to a level of soccer, wherever it is in the world, to where you’re going to be challenged but also see playing time and then build your resume from there. If an 18 year old is so exceptional, that he can go to an MLS team and play right away, like a Jordan Morris for example, who is scoring goals for the Seattle Sounders. But even he is 21 years of age, and spent 3 years at Stanford before going onto Seattle. I would doubt very much that at 17 or 18 years of age that anyone would have said that he is ready to be put in a professional environment. Again, there’s so many factors involved that if you can’t play, you’re not going to develop. So if all you’re going to be is in a professional training environment, then I believe it would be better for that player to go into the collegiate ranks and spend a couple of years playing college soccer. And these professional teams do keep an eye on these college players, those that own the rights as homegrown players. They talk to the college coach, and if there is cooperation between the college and the professional team, and if that player is ready and has matured and has demonstrated growth, then maybe at that point it would be time to bring him into a professional environment. But it’s not the possibility of him being good enough to see playing time. It has to be a decision of a head coach of a professional team saying, yes this player is ready to help me now or help me for 15-20 minutes a game, or I’m going to take a risk in giving this kid game-time to help him develop. Gyasi Zardes from the LA Galaxy is a very good example of this. Went through the academy program, came up through the ranks as a very good player, had a miserable first year under Bruce Arena with the LA Galaxy, but Bruce Arena believed in him, and was willing to take a risk on him, and spent another year trying to develop him. And in his second year, he ended up scoring 18 goals and got called up to the US National Team. So that’s an example of a coach believing in a player, willing to take a risk, willing to give him time, and even if he fails in a few games, you continue to give that player time under match conditions because that’s the only way that they are going to grow.”

DK: “What was the purpose of the Homegrown deal with the MLS and also Generation Adidas?”

SS: “The homegrown rule allows for an MLS team that has invested two years of time in their youth development program to retain the rights to that player, if every year they train at least 30 days with that professional team. So if they are 18 years of age and they have been with them since they were 15, and they spend at least two years in their academy program and they go off to college, all they have to do to retain those rights to that player for the MLS is for that player to return to that club team for 30 days over the summer, and when they train for 30 days, they retain those rights. So if they, at any point

in time say okay we think you're ready to play for our team, they would have the right to do that. It protects the investment of the individual MLS team for their time, effort and money that they put into developing players in their youth academy. If they are there for one year, then they can make the statement that the investment wasn't significant enough in time, effort and money to retain the rights to that player. The Generation Adidas concept is a player goes to college, there's a committee in the MLS of about five or six individuals that scower the college ranks looking for the best players that could potentially come out as a junior from college and be offered a Generation Adidas contract. The nice thing about those contracts is that one, they are guaranteed for four years to the individual. Two, they don't count against the salary cap for the MLS team, so it's a win-win. It's a win-win for the individual, it gives them guaranteed money for four years. And on top of that, they put aside I think it is between \$30,000 and \$50,000 into a trust fund for their education if in fact they need to go back to college at any point in time or after their career ends. That gives them the understanding that at least that if I leave college after my junior year, I will have a guaranteed contract for four years, I will be guaranteed four years to develop and make my way into negotiating a better contract, and then I'm also guaranteed x number of dollars for college when my career is over. So typically in any given year, it's somewhere between five and ten players are offered a Generation Adidas contract."

DK: "Now let's talk about Cal Poly for a second. How does Cal Poly help these athletes that have ambitions of going to the pro's?"

SS: "This is one of our recruiting tools is that all of our staff have coached at the professional level, and I've coached at the international level. Our schpiel and our recruiting efforts to the players that we are interested in is that we want to put them in a professional environment. Such that if they want to go and play professionally, that this is going to be the best environment for them to make that jump and transition. So whether it's the attention to detail, the speed of play, the demands in training, the types of council that we give to them, the opportunities that they're afforded during the summer months, our relationships with MLS teams and professional teams around the world. And quite frankly in our first year, four of our players went professionally, so word starts to get out that there is truly a path for top, elite high-school aged players, academy level players come to Cal Poly, play at a division one program, get a great education, but also there's a pathway to the pro's? That's a tremendous advantage for us from a recruiting standpoint."



# Appendix C

Transcribed Interview: Chris Eversley

The following interview is with former Cal Poly Men's Basketball and current overseas professional basketball player, Chris Eversley. Since the other two interviews I conducted were with coaches, I felt that getting a player's perspective on issues in the sports world would add a different insight to my previous interviewees.

Interviewer: David Kline

Respondent: Professional Basketball Player, Chris Eversley

Date of Interview: 5/27/16

*Interview Transcription:*

David Kline: "Does spending extra years in college help an athlete be better prepared for professional sports?"

Chris Eversley: "It gives you a chance to not only mature academically but socially. With more colleges around the country becoming more diverse, athletes are able to deal with situations outside of their norm because they have friends of different backgrounds. For me personally, I felt as though staying the whole time in college allowed me to not only get my degree, but find out who I was as a person in society before I went off into the world."

DK: "And speaking about Cal Poly specifically, how did Poly help athletes like yourself who had ambitions of playing at the next level?"

CE: "It gave us an opportunity to stand out. It's better to be a big fish in a small pond than a small fish in a big pond. The Big West conference isn't a power 6 conference but it's still an opportunity to go out and make some noise in your own rested and people take notice."

DK: "What's your opinion on the one-and-done rule?"

CE: "I'm a fan, I feel like it gives kids a way to get a year of maturity under their belt. They get to grow mentally and physically. Also, in basketball terms, they learn how to

play in a system with structure. Some kids need to make the jump right away due to financial constraints and I feel like the one and done rule gives them the best of both worlds.”

DK: “What do you think could be done to help college athletes hit their full potential during their college years?”

CE: “That could be anything and everything having to do with life and sports. Training, proper nutrition, learning about taxes and foreign income exclusions. There are a lot of things that I had to learn after I left college that apply to me specifically as a professional athlete. Maybe a specific course for those who have pro aspirations so they aren’t blindsided with legal issues after they graduate.”

DK: “How difficult has it been for you to transition to playing overseas? Both on and off the court?”

CE: “On the court wasn’t really that big of a transition. Besides a few minor rule changes, basketball is going to be the same wherever you go. The main difference I noticed in Europe was that guys are physically much bigger and stronger than here in the states. In Europe, you can play professionally from a young age so a lot of players come up in that system and thrive because they are used to it. Off the court is a different story, you have to really love yourself if you are going to play abroad professionally. Most of my time is spent by myself in my apartment or out and about in the city. You have teammates, but more often than not, everyone has their own place so when practice is over, so is the communication. Food is another factor because everything just tastes a little weird compared to what I’m used to. Language barriers can be a problem in Spain, France and Eastern Europe but most teams and players will speak English. Talking to people back home is also tough at times because you are hours ahead. If you are fortunate enough to have social teammates, you must learn to cherish that.”

DK: “Now I asked Coach Callero this question and I’m curious on your take. If there was, let’s say a five-star recruit who was considering Cal Poly and a basketball powerhouse like a Kentucky or Duke. Hypothetically, if you knew that person, what would your pitch to them be to come to Cal Poly instead of an athletic powerhouse?”

CE: “I would just stress the fact that the athlete could be the big fish in a small pond. Those schools have a larger name but won’t necessarily provide you with the opportunity to be the man because you have teammates that are likely also getting NBA looks. At a school like Cal Poly, if you are going to be the guy, things will fall primarily on your shoulders and it takes a certain type of player to do and want that. In regards to not getting national attention, if you’re good enough, the right people will find you no matter how small your school is.”

DK: “And lastly, how has the jump from high school straight to the NBA panned out for a majority of those who’ve done it?”

CE: "I don't think it's the right move. Every now and then a superstar comes from those ranks. But Kobe and LeBron are Kobe and LeBron, they really can't be duplicated. The age rule put in place is huge because it helps keep things structured; Goes back to the first question you asked. My advice is to go to college, get your degree because you're a freak injury away from never being playing again and being an afterthought to a monetized business."