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### Illegal Recruitment: A Self-Impllosion and Corruption of the NCAA

Today's high school/amateur athletes continue to get bigger, faster and stronger with every collegiate recruiting class. It would be easy to assume with more and more athletes having this type of ability that colleges would be on a more level playing field. That assumption is terribly wrong. The death penalty/capital punishment as defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary can be defined in short as: being sentenced to execution by a court of law for crimes committed (Capital Punishment). In collegiate sports, the death penalty has been enacted once and only once because of the ramifications that it had on the program. Why was the program given such a harsh penalty? Two words: illegal recruitment. Illegal recruitment, in short, can be defined by the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) as athletes receiving improper benefits from colleges, boosters (wealthy alumni donors to the university) or coaches to influence potential athletes to come and play for their respective athletic teams. Another thing destroying the NCAA are professional sports agents and scouts for professional sports teams. They continue to convince these young athletes to become a professional athlete at younger and younger ages. In this world money talks and when an agent or scout puts money in front of these young athletes' faces, it is very often hard for them to turn it down. Often, these athletes do not come from the best situations, so they want to provide their respective families with the lives they have always wanted. Part of the NCAA's mission statement is to provide fair opportunities

to all athletes at all levels and illegal recruitment, as well as professional scouts and agents, are contributing to a tear down of not only a destruction of the NCAA's mission but also self-implosion of the NCAA as well. With student-athletes wanting more, it gives these boosters, scouts and agents giving these illegal gifts, that support bigger universities, more opportunities to recruit high profile athletes with ease, which is giving smaller colleges and universities no chance to compete (especially at the division one level) and is causing corruption in the NCAA and is not keeping the playing field level.

In today's world of collegiate recruitment, there are a plethora of things that can make a potential athlete ineligible to play for the university that they have decided to attend. Having elite athletic ability is not enough just to be able to play sports at the collegiate level anymore. With it being so difficult to play sports after high school, why would anyone want to offer someone benefits that could potentially make them ineligible to play at the collegiate level or potentially ruin their life if they were, one day, going to be good enough to become a professional athlete? To simplify things, there are three major categories in which a student becomes eligible/ineligible for collegiate athletics participation. The three categories are: financial aid, ethical conduct, and amateurism. Ethical conduct simply is not breaking laws or gambling. Some athletes, in the past, have been accused of point shaving (NCAA, 1-3). This would be one example of ethical conduct that could cause a student-athlete to lose their eligibility. Often times this does not necessarily become an issue with the NCAA, the respective institution will usually handle the athlete depending on the severity of their offense. These punishments can usually range anywhere from suspension for half of a game to a whole season.

The NCAA prides itself on its mission and the idea that it is a non-profit organization. The mission statement of the NCAA is defined in short by its core values, but the true mission statement of the NCAA is:

The National Collegiate Athletic Association is a membership-driven organization dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of student-athletes and equipping them with the skills to succeed on the playing field, in the classroom and throughout life.

We support learning through sports by integrating athletics and higher education to enrich the college experience of student-athletes. NCAA members – mostly colleges and universities, but also conferences and affiliated groups – work together to create the framework of rules for fair and safe competition.

Those rules are administered by NCAA national office staff, which also organizes national championships and provides other resources to support student-athletes and the schools they attend. The NCAA membership and national office work together to help more than 460,000 student-athletes develop their leadership, confidence, discipline and teamwork through college sports. (NCAA, 1)

With this continued idea of the student-athlete, as can be seen in the NCAA mission statement, they student-athlete would have to stay just that. As will be explained later, if student-athletes were to be paid, they would technically be employees and the NCAA would cease to exist as it is known today.

To the average person, a non-profit organization is probably just an organization that does not make money but instead is a charity for a number of different types of causes. This is mostly right, however according to [legaldictionary.com](http://legaldictionary.com), the true definition of a non-profit

organization is, “A corporation or an association that conducts business for the benefit of the general public without shareholders and without a profit motive,” (Nonprofit, 1). The NCAA defines itself as a non-profit organization, but actually has 501 © 3 status. This basically means that like most other non-profit organizations, is exempt from federal income tax. If the NCAA is exempt from federal income tax, then where does their money actually go. Does it go towards their student-athletes, operations or tournaments? What can be found on the NCAA website is that a huge portion of their money actually goes to their employees as well as putting on their major tournaments (not including Division One FBS college football which supports its own BCS championship). Maybe this is a sign of corruption as will be seen later; players do receive stipends from their respective athletic programs, but maybe if the NCAA paid their employees just a little bit less, the stipends could possibly increase for all the student-athletes. Is it really necessary for the President of the NCAA to make over one million dollars (NCAA President, 1)? That means that most of the hire executive officers took even just a small pay cut of one hundred thousand dollars, the NCAA would probably have around one million dollars more in their budget that could possibly contribute to student-athlete stipends. One huge problem with paying student-athletes instead of giving them their stipends would be that it would not be fair to all student-athletes. Typically the men’s football and basketball programs at universities are what keeps the athletic department in the black. So, is it fair to pay every student-athlete when in reality, it is only the athletes from two sports that are really bringing in the money for their respective universities?

Amateurism and financial aid often seem to come hand-in-hand with one another in terms of recruitment violations. Amateurism is essentially what makes a student-athlete a student athlete. A student-athlete becomes ineligible due to amateurism when they start accepting gifts or

money for their athletic performance. When this happens, they transition from amateur to professional athlete in the eyes of the NCAA because they are getting paid for their athletic abilities (Student-Athlete, 1-3). However, what needs to be remembered is that once a student-athlete signs an agent and declares for their respective sports' professional draft; they automatically lose their amateur status. Instead, what could be used as a more common practice for athletes is them, "testing the waters." Instead of the athlete signing an agent, unless they are a senior athlete or guaranteed top ten pick, an athlete can actually declare for a professional draft without signing an agent just to see where they could potentially land in their sports' draft. Unfortunately this is not common practice and athletes will sign an agent even without being guaranteed a huge sum of money by getting drafted high in their respective sports' professional draft.

What is becoming more and more common is seeing high school basketball players travel overseas to play for a year before they become eligible for the National Basketball Association's (NBA) draft in a year. This idea has become popular since the NBA has an age limit that requires most players to go college for one year before turning pro. However, by going overseas, athletes can skip this process and go straight to the NBA. Athletes seem to like the idea of going overseas to make money, instead of going to college to further their education. This is one obvious sign of corruption, if these athletes do not see the value of attending college, and then colleges are obviously not doing enough to show athletes why it is truly important to go to college.

A scandal that took place in college basketball occurred at the University of Memphis. The Huffington Post reported in 2009 that former basketball star at Memphis, Derrick Rose, had an unknown source take the SAT for him. Although the person was never found, the University of Memphis was stripped of its NCAA tournament wins that the program had accrued during

Rose's time at the university. It has never been proven, but is speculated, that the head coach of the team knew this had occurred (Taliaferro, 1). In another article produced by the Huffington Post came this quote:

The NCAA report did not identify the ineligible player by name, though descriptions of the athlete involved lead to the conclusion it could only be Rose. He was the only player who played just that season at Memphis – a fact noted by the governing body of college sports. Rose went on to be selected by the Chicago Bulls as the No. 1 pick in the 2008 draft and later won the NBA rookie of the year award (Walker 10).

This is just the first of many reasons proving that the NCAA is becoming corrupt. The program was not just stripped of their NCAA tournament wins, but they were stripped of all thirty-eight of their wins that season (an NCAA record). What can be concluded from this is that just because someone is a stellar athlete does not mean that they are an outstanding scholar as well. An old saying is that, "Not everyone is smart enough to go to college," although this is a very harsh statement, it can be seen here that this may be true. Since universities still require athletes to meet admittance standards, passing an SAT to the requirements set by a university may be difficult for some. This could be the possible reason the individual did not want to take the test on his own.

Official Recruitment periods are the period in which collegiate athletic programs can actively recruit student-athletes. The NCAA defines recruitment as, "any solicitation of prospective student-athletes or their parents by an institutional staff member or by a representative of the institution's athletics interests for the purpose of securing a prospective student-athlete's enrollment and ultimate participation in the institution's intercollegiate athletics program." (Recruiting Calendars, 1) So, any extracurricular activity the does not occur through a

university official can be seen as illegal recruitment. It used to be common practice for prospective athletes to stay close to home and play for programs that they may have grown up cheering for. They also may have been inclined to make it as a family decision. However, today with these improper benefits, neither of these seem to be the case. It seems as if these athletes are just choosing either based off of the prospect of money in the future or the impermissible benefits that are being offered to them (most likely by boosters of the university). Boosters fit into the mold of someone who is not an university official. Although they may donate thousands of dollars to the university, any contact from them to a potential student-athlete can be considered illegal recruitment and could potentially cause harm to the university.

Famous because of the novel and movie “The Blind Side,” the Michael Oher case started quite a bit of controversy. Growing up Oher came from nothing and his father was murdered when he was in high school. When he was taken in, Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy had no idea he would become such a football star. Having both graduated from the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), this created a conflict. With Oher being recruited heavily by many, many universities he ultimately chose Ole Miss. The Tuohy’s not only were alumni, but they give a ton of money to the University. So, they perfectly fit the definition of a booster. The NCAA went into an investigation to make sure that they did not give Oher all of his opportunities just so he would attend the University of Mississippi to play football. This just is one example of boosters who potentially can offer athletes without swaying them to go to their university, but instead brought him in from the goodness of their hearts.

As many people know, the financial aid process in college can often be a pain to deal with. These rules are even stricter for potential/current student-athletes preparing to attend college for the first time or ones that are in college already. To be financially eligible for

competition at the collegiate level, an athlete must only be receiving monetary help from parents or the university, scholarships or FAFSA (a government organization that determines how much financial aid a college student can receive) money, not boosters. (Student-Athlete, 1-3). Sadly, not every potential scholarship athlete has the greatest background and some of these athletes come from homes in poverty. So, when a booster or agent puts money or gifts of high value in front of their respective faces it would be hard for them to turn down the money. It has been seen that being a full time student-athlete can really be taxing on these individuals and if they come from a poor situation, they most likely would not have money to go out and do anything since, like most students, these athletes do not receive a refund from their schools to use to spend on housing, food, etc. According to the NCAA eligibility rules, however, student-athletes can have jobs as long as they are not receiving more money than they deserve for the work they perform. Also, these athletes can only work during seasons in which they are not currently active in competition (Student-Athlete, 3-4). These rules came to fruition when student-athletes started receiving a lot more money than they deserved working at minimum wage jobs because boosters would be the manager or owner of a business and wanted to make sure that these athletes were able to stay in school and continue playing for their respective universities.

One example of this took place at The University of Southern California (USC). The athlete was from Texas and a not so great home situation. So, a booster for the university offered not only to help him with whatever expenses the athlete had, but the booster also provided the athlete's mother with a house in the area just so she could see every one of the athlete's games throughout his collegiate career. This person not only turned out to be a booster for the university, but ended up being the player's agent as well. Who was this athlete in question? Reggie Bush. According to Fox News, in 2010 Bush was forced to give up his Heisman Trophy

(awarded to the best player in Division One FBS college football yearly) because of all the rule violations that occurred during not just his recruitment to the University of Southern California, but through his collegiate career as well. Not only did this negatively affect Bush, but the school as well. The football had to vacate its last two wins of the season; including their BCS National Championship Game victory over The University of Oklahoma (Former). So, illegal recruitment not only hurts the players but can ultimately severely hurt a program. As will be seen later USC was lucky to only have two vacate two wins. The NCAA had to do away with a rule that could have completely destroyed their historic program. This is just another example of how illegal recruitment and boosters continue to corrupt the NCAA.

Many athletes, boosters, and scouts have arguments against the athletes not getting paid for the money their respective schools make off of their abilities. Athletes have gone as far as getting a whole video game series shut down because Electronic Arts was using their “likeness” in their college sports games. Their main claim that, when playing the games, it was very apparent if a high caliber player, say at the University of Florida was on the game, that it would be easily identifiable as that player. In 2013, the New York Times reported that several students filed lawsuits against the company and the NCAA seemed to be left standing alone in the case. Eventually, Electronic Arts reached a settlement with the athletes (Eder). Athletes have also been upset recently that they do not see a part of any jersey sales. They claim that people know it is their jersey so they want it. This is true, it can be seen that colleges sell jerseys without names on the back, but it is very apparent which athlete’s jersey that they are trying to sell. It seems athletes also want money from ticket and memorabilia sold because they feel entitled to a part of the profit. Athletes have even gone so far to try and start labor unions and at Northwestern University, they actually succeeded.

If these athletes ultimately end up being paid, they would cause the NCAA to no longer exist as a nonprofit organization as a non-profit, mission based organization. With the mission statement being defined to benefit student-athletes in the way it does, they would no longer be athletes but employees of the organization, there full voiding what the purpose of the NCAA is as well. The NCAA, if this happened, would have to redefine who they are as a whole, by either changing what their mission statement or becoming a for-profit organization since they pay a number of their student-athletes.

Another potential argument that can be seen as to why athletes should be paid is the extra revenue that can potentially be generated from an outstanding athletic season for a university's respective sport program. Each year, collegiate athletic programs make millions of dollars in revenue during and after successful seasons in sports. It is not a coincidence that teams who have these successful seasons make more money than in seasons that are not as successful. For example, when Florida State had a mediocre season (by their program standards) 7-6 and then subsequently turned around and went 13-0; revenue from merchandise sales increased. Was this a coincidence? Absolutely not, fans are not just paying for the name on the front of the jersey; they are paying for the idea of the student-athlete who is represented by the number on the jersey. Student-athletes are often thought of as just that, but a great number of students on college campuses have either on or off campus jobs that allow them to make money. In the life of a student-athlete, their respective sport is practically a full-time job. Having a part time job makes it seemingly impossible for them to hold a job. Even if they were capable of it, they are only able to work a certain amount of hours at this part-time job anyway. It can be argued that these student-athletes would not play as hard if they were paid, but it has been proven and seen that athletes will tend to play harder when something is on the line; whether it be for a

scholarship coming out of high school or during a contract year for a professional athlete respectively. It comes down to the fact the collegiate student-athletes put in more time to their sport than other students do at part-time jobs, a student-athlete will play harder with compensation on the line and during great seasons they bring in a ton of extra money to the university through merchandise sales. Ultimately this is just another argument that student-athletes deserve to be paid for seemingly unearned revenue that they are bringing to their respective universities.

While merchandise is flying off shelves during successful seasons, even during not so great seasons highly recognizable athlete's jerseys that can be directly tied to the specific players often sell for substantially higher prices than normal. For example, according to an article published by The Daily Tar Heel, The University of North Carolina Men's basketball player Marcus Paige's jersey sold for almost 200 dollars more than it would have normally at the university's bookstore. However, according to NCAA guidelines, since Paige is a student-athlete he cannot receive any type of compensation for this jersey. Is this really fair? The extra revenue generated can be easily traced just to the simple fact Paige's signature was on the jersey. Athletes maybe should not be given the normal sale price, but it should be considered that they receive any extra revenue that can be directly traced to them. One common argument that is often made against this is that these student-athletes get paid based off of the scholarships they receive. Yes, they receive partial or full-ride scholarships, but what about all the extra revenue these big time athletes generate during spectacular seasons?

A final argument for paying college athletes is; paying collegiate student-athletes for the perceived unearned revenue is something that can potentially be considered. Great seasons with highly marketable players bring in more revenue than a sub-par season will. Players like Johnny

Manziel at Texas A&M not only have revived their respective programs, but have helped to generate enough money to renovate their respective stadiums. With these arguments to the idea of collegiate student-athletes already being paid, a first step to fixing the solution would be to compensate players if a jersey or other merchandise can be linked directly to the player then they could be compensated for this. With these student-athletes deserving to be paid, it may not be feasible in the foreseeable future, the NCAA could possibly take steps right now to ease it in instead of drastically trying to give players' salaries; they could possibly just increase stipend rules so that these athletes can have a little more to live on.

An easy response to this is just to argue that more than likely these players will be the ones producing or scoring touchdowns on Sundays, making the Sports Center Top Ten plays with their slam dunks in the National Basketball association (NBA) or any other sport they may potentially go on the play at the professional level. This is where they can make money in their respective futures. What it seems that these athletes have lost is a sense of pride in their programs. In the past, student-athletes would often choose their school because of pride or because they were the best program. Today, it seems that these potential student-athletes are choosing their schools just based off of whom is going to give them the most benefits. This occurs more often in basketball; it seems these athletes only choose a potential school based off of who could potentially get them to the NBA the fastest. With this is just adds corruption to NCAA athletics. College athletics used to mean a ton to fans, but with athletes starting to show they are only there for one year because they have to be it can be seen that it is turning off an older generation that grew up watching players stay in school for all four years, get their degrees and then go to the NBA. It can also be seen that student-athletes can have jobs, as stated

previously, but if they can have a job, even if they can only work a few hours, this should be enough to get them through with their given stipends.

Again it is easy to counter-argue against this main argument that anyone may have against the idea that illegal recruitment and athletes themselves, boosters and professional agents and the idea of paying student-athletes are creating corruption in the NCAA. It may be true that universities make money from jersey, ticket and other memorabilia sales because these athletes keep the program strong and winning, but when the numbers are truly crunched, these athletes really are getting paid to be there. Beginning with tuition, most of these athletes that want compensated are the star players for their respective universities. More often than not, they are there on full-ride scholarships and only have to pay for books (they get money back from the university once they have paid for the books.) Take a school like Notre Dame for example, according to the financial aid office, the estimated cost of living for the average student is 62,461 dollars per year (Office of Financial Aid). Case number one as to how these athletes are actually getting paid. If one multiplies that amount by four years it totals up to 240,000 dollars and if an athlete is red-shirted (does not play in games but practices because they are not quite ready for collegiate competition), which often happens, then they will be at the university for five years which jumps the total up to 300,000 dollars. Getting paid 60,000 a year straight out of high school to go to school does not seem like a bad gig.

Case number two on how these athletes are getting paid: they get a monthly stipend. Every student athlete receives a monthly stipend that is theoretically supposed to cover expenses such as: housing, food, entertainment, etc. Yet they claim they need more; maybe it is because athletes can be seen on television with full tattoo arm sleeves at nineteen or twenty years old. When one digs into the research of the Northwestern labor union case, they find that these

players are given an allotted amount of money per month for living expenses and still claim that it is not enough to live on. With tuition, plus room and board, at Northwestern (according to the University's website) being 65,000 dollars per year, (Northwestern) it seems that these athletes are in fact, actually getting paid. The third and final case on how these athletes are getting paid was reported by CNN in early 2014. It is that they get unlimited meal plans now at the division one level, (Almasy). So, these athletes get stipends that help pay for food, but they are getting meal plans that give them unlimited food on campus? Seems like these athletes are actually spending their money on things that they should not be spending money on and they should consider spending money more wisely.

When college athletics was gaining tremendous popularity, these student-athletes were some of America's finest role models. Sadly, today, that is just not always the case. Back when college athletics were gaining their popularity, it seemed as if all of their star players were role models for younger teens or even college students during the time period. Today these athletes are getting thrown out of fraternity parties, stealing from convenience stores in their college towns and even sexually assaulting females in their campus communities. What is happening to them? Disappointingly, the only thing that is happening to them is being either suspended from their teams or just dismissed altogether. The problem with this is that these allegations are being proven true social media and that even players at highly respected programs are being caught doing this.

According to a report on [bleacherreport.com](http://bleacherreport.com), recently the prestigious Duke University basketball program had to let a player go due to sexual assault allegations (Duke Issues, 1). Previously, Legendary Coach Mike Krzyzewski had been known for his outstanding recruitment of players with high moral worth and integrity. After this, it is easy to see that even coaches

known for this type of recruitment may be starting to recruit kids just because of their talent, not just because of what they can do on the field or court. The school later on to make a press release about the statement denying that he was not under investigation for sexual assault:

“Sulaimon is not currently under investigation by the school. This was confirmed by Bob Ekstrand, who is serving as Sulaimon’s advisor. While Ekstrand is a local Durham attorney, he is reluctant to identify himself as Sulaimon’s “lawyer,” since the former player is not subject to any current legal proceedings. Multiple sources say there was not one specific incident that served as the impetus for Sulaimon's dismissal. Rather it was an accumulation of events that led to that action, including a missed 11 p.m. curfew that occurred shortly before he was kicked off the team (Duke Issues, 1).”

This was actually the first time in the history of the program the Krzyzewski has had to dismiss a student-athlete from his basketball program. However when reports later surfaced, it was apparent that the school knew what had been going on because they later release this statement to the press:

"Any allegation of student misconduct that is brought to the attention of our staff and coaches is immediately referred to the Office of Student Conduct in Student Affairs, which has responsibility for upholding the Duke code of conduct. The athletics department does not investigate or adjudicate matters of student conduct, and cooperates completely in the process. These investigations are conducted thoroughly, in a timely manner, and with great care to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all students involved. Those procedures have been, and continue to be, followed by Coach Mike Krzyzewski and all members of the men’s basketball program. Coach Krzyzewski and

his staff understand and have fulfilled their responsibilities to the university, its students and the community (Duke Issues, 1)"

It seems as if Duke understood now what had ultimately happened since the former statement had occurred in January 2015 and with the latter occurring in early March 2015. After the first release Krzyzewski was open to speak about what was going on and why Rasheed was dismissed, but never fully explained what had exactly happened. After the second release, it was clear what the player (Rasheed) had done and for some reason Krzyzewski declined to comment on this situation this time around. Why would he have declined this time when he was so willing to speak about it the first time? It could possibly come from the idea that he knew what was going on the whole time, but may not have wanted to unveil the truth until reports were confirmed or he was just trying to dance around the truth. If the latter is true, then not only are the boosters, agents and illegal recruitment causing corruption in the NCAA, but possibly some of its most historic coaches are as well. If these types of coaches are going to cover up stuff like this, then what is to stop not so famous coaches from doing this then? Although this is an extreme case with it being a case of sexual assault, more and more programs are having to dismiss their players because of conduct either detrimental to the team or breaking the team's rules. It seems that today's athletes continue to get worse and that probably stems from them being courted so heavily during the recruitment period and while they are in college, people treat them as if they are gods. Treating them like gods would make them feel as if they cannot get in trouble for anything they do. It just goes to show that illegal recruitment is causing this because it is giving these athletes a sense of entitlement and more and more athletes are having more run-ins with the law today.

The idea behind a student-athlete is that they would be just that; a student first an athlete second sadly, that is just not the case anymore. With athletes leaving for the pros either straight out of high school (baseball), being one-and-done (basketball) and others leaving after playing two (if the athlete was given a red-shirt and was only able to practice with the team during the first year) or three years in the collegiate ranks (football). In the early days of collegiate athletics, many student-athletes did not just go to college to play sports then go on to be a professional player, but they also went to a school that would give them the best education. The most popular and best teams in college football before the 1970's was the Ivy League Conference. Today, that is not the case. Although universities in bigger conferences are often great schools, not all of the athletes being recruited to play for that school will end up attending a school because of their specific types of academic programs. This is more of the case at the Division One level as opposed to anything lower. It just comes back to greed. If someone believes in a potential student-athlete enough, they will tell them that they believe the athlete is good enough to make it to the professional ranks someday. So, these student-athletes today are not choosing schools because of academics, but who can provide them the best chance to make it to the professional ranks. This is just another sign the illegal recruitment is causing a self-implosion and corruption in the NCAA. Not only does this hurt the individual athletes, but until recently these athletes leaving early to go play professionally it hurt graduation rates at the universities.

Basketball and football are not the only sports to watch in terms of corruption early recruitment to the professional ranks in the NCAA; many people should heavily consider start paying more attention to baseball and how recruiting/going to play at the professional level really works. Many of the student-athletes whom play baseball in college often got drafted out of high school and go on to play baseball in college to sharpen their skills. Also, with there being 36

rounds in the Major League Baseball draft, approximately 1,080 athletes get drafted and the high school athletes are typically chosen in the latter rounds. Many of these athletes that get chosen can sign legal contracts saying that they will still go to college, but still plan on playing for the team that drafted them. How is this legal? Basically, it is not, these teams' professional scouts that manage to convince an athlete to skip college and go straight to the MLB are just as bad as boosters.

These scouts are making promises of money, the likes of which these athletes have never seen and often times it is very hard for the athlete to turn the offer down. If the athlete does turn it down, however, the scout basically has the athlete make the choice to play for them without even leaving their choices open when they become eligible for the draft again after their junior season in college. This is corrupting the NCAA by giving athletes bigger egos than they probably need to have. Having an athlete who got drafted out of high school on your team who knows he is eventually going to play baseball professionally could potentially kill the team's moral. Said player could constantly boast to others about how he got drafted straight out of high school, but decided to come and play at the collegiate level instead. Boasting about this and their talent it could really irritate some of the other players. Causing strife not only in the locker room, but arguments that could carry over onto the playing field as well.

Corruption in the NCAA is not just a new thing it has been taking place for many, many years. In a documentary done by *ESPN* entitled *Pony Excess*, Southern Methodist University (or SMU) was discovered to be cheating in the recruitment process of their football players. This film shows fans of collegiate football just how SMU got to be so good in the late 1970's. SMU's football program seemingly came out of nowhere when they reached their great success during the late 1970's. The team nickname was "The Pony Express," after the school mascot and the

tremendous amount of talent that the program had in the backfield. The school recruited their football players by paying them upward sums of 20,000 dollars at a minimum. Running back Eric Dickerson, who had committed to Texas A&M, ended up changing his commitment to SMU at the last minute. His decision came down to the fact SMU offered a brand new Pontiac Trans AM. The school was caught for cheating when former player Mark Lewis reported the school for not paying him the amount of money he had been promised when he was recruited (30 for 30). If this is not a process of corrupting athletes with promises of so much money or even the car, then what is?

The documentary also presented an interesting penalty that had never been laid down before on a collegiate athletics program. It was called the “Death Penalty” and it forced a complete shutdown of the SMU football program for two years (30 for 30). As mentioned in the first paragraph, the death penalty is a very serious thing to deal with. The NCAA has only levied this penalty once and for good reason. SMU’s football program has never truly recovered from this devastatingly harsh penalty. This penalty did not come without a rightful warrant. SMU had previously committed many recruitment violations throughout the late 1970’s and actually gotten caught. However, this penalty placed on the program completely devastated it and it was truly like death. The program reached its first bowl game (FBS college football’s postseason) in 2011 since the penalty was about thirty years earlier. With the complete devastation the “Death Penalty” caused, it forced the NCAA to reconsider implementing it and has since not implemented it. The NCAA has to do something, however, or their athletes and the association as a whole will continue to become more and more corrupt.

So, where does all of this corruption and a future self-implosion of the NCAA come from? It simply starts with the illegal recruitment of these collegiate athletes when they are still

in high school. With all these benefits being given from potential suitors to these potential athletes, it not only gives them a sense of entitlement from day one, but also a type of greediness that could potentially ruin the NCAA as the world knows it today. When these boosters and potential agents (again usually come about during the collegiate years for spectacular athletes) put all of this money in these late adolescent teens/twenty year olds, it is pretty easy to acknowledge that they will get greedy and continuously want more. Also, when some student-athletes are coming straight from property again, any kind of money put in front of their faces will almost automatically entice them. Especially when it can be pointed out by those around them (student-athletes) that they are generating big time revenue for their respective universities and athletic departments.

With illegal recruitment, boosters, scouts, professional agents and athletes essentially getting paid, the NCAA is becoming corrupt (if it was not already). High school athletes are in fact getting bigger, stronger, faster and more talented with each passing generation. This theoretically should even out the playing field for smaller universities to compete with bigger universities. Sadly, as the information shows, the corruption in the NCAA is making this just not the case. With student-athletes most likely getting paid they are no longer amateur athletes. The NCAA is by definition a nonprofit organization, but are they really? They pull in millions of dollars in revenue each year, but where does this money go? Yes, they pay their salaried employees, but where does the rest go? A final sign of corruption is that maybe the NCAA is not allocating its money in the proper fashion. Maybe if the NCAA gave more money to schools for athletic scholarship funds, the need for boosters and illegal recruitment may in fact, not be necessary thus ending the corruption currently taking place in the NCAA. Yes, the “Death Penalty” may be harsh, but until all of this illegal recruitment of student-athletes stops, maybe

the NCAA should consider using it once again. If illegal recruitment continues at this pace, it will continue to corrupt the NCAA and cause the organization to cease to exist as everyone knows it today.

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