The Doom Loop of Intercollegiate Athletics and Its Parallels to the IOC and FIFA

Benjamin Bendrich
Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany
University Sports Institute
Faculty of Social Science
Overview

Research by the author

• Support services for student-athletes
• Developing a support program for student-athletes at German universities
• Aim of studies: learn from mistakes that have been made in the US
• Detailed analysis of the American system
• Visited several American athletic powerhouses

Outline of the presentation

Important developments
Important bylaws
Public perception
Current relevance
Parallels to IOC and FIFA

Play the Game Conference

October 31st 2013
Athletics in American Higher Education

• Rooted in the classical ideal of *Mens sana in corpore sano* - a sound mind in a sound body
• A complex/controversial aspect of higher education
• Student-athletes → modern stars; often labeled as “dumb jocks” (Kennedy, 2007, 1)
• Millions in revenue for athletic departments (but only a few make a profit)
• Based on the mythical principles of “amateurism” and the “student-athletes” (SA)
NCAA Bylaw 2.9 - The Principle of Amateurism

- “2.9 - The Principle of Amateurism: Student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport, and their participation should be motivated primarily by education and by the physical, mental and social benefits to be derived. Student participation in intercollegiate athletics is an avocation, and student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises” (NCAA, 2009, 4).
Current Scandals

- University of Miami Scandal
- Oklahoma State Scandal
- Penn State Scandal

Cartoon by Dana Summers

Cartoon by Chris Britt
Today’s Big-Time College Sports

• Texas, Florida, Ohio State, Michigan, Penn State etc. - $40 to $80 million in profits/year (football) — Texas: $163.3 million – revenue (2012) (USA Today, 2013)
• Enables NCAA, corporations and coaches to make money
• Unpaid labor of young athletes
• „(...) a system imposed by well-meaning paternalists and rationalized with hoary sentiments about caring for the well-being of the colonized“ (Branch, 2011)
• Star high-school players get paid under-the-table
• Incompetent SA are kept eligible for athletic competition
• Difference between high- and low-profile sports
NCAA

- Power grew with television revenues
- 1984 - *NCAA v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma*
  - NCAA looses television market for football
- Today:
  - Longhorn Network, Pac 12 Network, Notre Dame, Big 10 Television, SEC-TV etc.
- Still controls basketball tourney
- 2010, only 22 of the 120 football bowl subdivision schools made a profit
- 12 executive members- President Emmert gets $2 million / year and all other members get $400,000 / year (Zirin, 2011)
NCAA and University Licensee Contract Agreements

NCAA

• 40 Licensee contract agreements (Otto, 2009)
• College sports on film
• NCAA Football (video game) → Electronic Arts sold 2.5 million copies (2008)
• Athletes likenesses are used by the NCAA
• None of the profits go to active or former athletes (Branch, 2011).

Universities (Examples)

University of California, Berkeley
  126 Corporate Sponsors in 2009 (Otto, 2009)
Ohio State
  outsourced all of its promotional rights to the international sports marketer IMG
  College
  $111 million / 10-year contract
University of Texas at Austin
  Longhorn Network
  $11 million / year (ESPN)
The Highest-Paid Employee in Each State

GRAPHICS BY REUBEN FISCHER-BAUM

Play the Game Conference 2013, Aarhus, Denmark

October 31st 2013
“Student- Athletes“: Academics in Intercollegiate Sports

1940’s - Early shift in public perception
• REFORM: Sanity Code

1950’s - The end of amateurism
• REFORM: Sanity Code is revised and weakened
• Basketball – scandal = first “death penalty”
• Judge Streit concluded that commercialism was “rampant.”

1950’s and 1960’s - Expansion and commercialism
• NCAA experienced tremendous growth (television)
• REFORM: 1.6 rule

1970’s - Academic eligibility
• REFORM: 1973, 2.0 rule
• REFORM: Proposition 48’

1980’s - Academic support

1990’s - Academic Support and life skills
• REFORM: Proposition 16
• NCAA Life Skills Program

2000s
• REFORM: 2003 – Sliding Scale

Play the Game Conference 2013, Aarhus, Denmark
Scandal / Aftermath: academic fraud, cheating

Logical Consequence: exploitation, scandals, breaches of law

General Public: outcry, bad publicity, discussions

Reaction: new minimum academic requirements are set

Counteraction: academic standards get revised and weakened

Presidents, Faculty

Cycle breaker: Law?

Unpropotional growth of bylaws

Play the Game Conference 2013, Aarhus, Denmark

October 31st 2013
NCAA - A Global Player in the Sports World?

- 12 executive members
- TV-contract: $10.8 billion/14 yrs.
- 3,084 billion (2009-2012)

- 24 executive members
- TV-contract: 2,4 billion (2007-10)
- Sponsorships: 1,072 billion (2007-10)

- 14 executive members
- TV-contract: 3,91 billion (2009-12)
- Sponsorships: 957 million (2009-12)
### NCAA
- "Amateurs"
- SA have to give up their marketing rights
- Noble Idea: Amateur sports
- Today: Market driven

### FIFA und IOC
- Professionals
- §40 of the Olympic Charta - no private sponsors during OG
- Noble Idea: amateur/ non-profit
- Today: Market driven

### Off shore NCAA island:
- Reduced or no taxes
- State subsidies for stadiums
- Universities cover depts/ costs
- Limited checks and balances

### Off-shore islands:
- Reduced or no taxes
- State subsidies for stadiums
- Host covers cost
- Limited checks and balances
Common Features?

- Commercialism
- Exploitation of unpaid labor (unprivileged young adults)
- Underegulated
- Market driven
- No self-regulation
- (Academic) fraud
- Bribery of athlete
- Match fixing
- Doping
- No athlete's voice
- Governmental or legislative influence necessary
- Corruption

October 31st 2013
Play the Game Conference 2013, Aarhus, Denmark
Thank you for your attention!
Juvenal: Mens sana in corpore sano

• 10th satire: located in rhyme/ line 356
• Not a full sentence, verb is MISSING! **CAUTION!**
• Sentence: “orandum est, ut *sit* mens sana in corpore sano.“ the result is a sentence in **subjunctive**
• Juvenal uses irony in regard to gladiators
• The words have been taken out of context and misused
• So is it just wishful thinking by the NCAA to have a *healthy mind in a healthy student-athlete’s body*?
• Does Juvenals’ irony/ satire fit the current state of Intercollegiate Athletics?